THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 12 February, 1930 Number 2

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The London Naval Conference—Armaments and War—Imperialism and Pacifism—Basis of Bourgeois Pacifism—Imperialism is War—A World-Robbers' Agreement—Rôle of Pacifism—Labour Imperialism—Labour and Armaments—War on Soviet Union—"Minimum Requirements"—Limitation as War Preparation—Labour Government's Rôle

THE London Naval Conference brings war a stage nearer. The antagonists are now beginning to measure their weapons with precision. "Parity" has introduced a new element of intensity into naval competition and mutual suspicions; it is the most highly modernised form of naval competition. Such measurement of arms has no meaning save in relation to a future war. These calculations of ships and guns are not performed for amusement, to equip a child's nursery. They have reference to real things, to weapons of war. It is the whole irony of this situation that these calculations of armaments, these adoptions of enormous building programmes which mean actual increase in effective fighting strength, these unconcealed rivalries, are conducted in the form of a gigantic bluff of talk of "disarmament" and "peace." This bluff is so successful that large numbers of workers are led (through skilful manipulation of the "Labour" strings) unwittingly to cheer the preparers of their destruction, while ardent pacifists are drawn into eager technical discussions of the relative fighting value of a cruiser or a battleship, of a 10-inch or an 8-inch gun. But in fact this bluff is an essential part of imperialist war preparations; without it the facts of the preparations would be too open and too ugly. And it is fitting that this most delicate task of imperialist war preparation is entrusted to a Labour Government, since the essence of the task is to secure the willing co-operation of the masses in the preparations for their future slaughter. The Labour Government negotiates and manœuvres on behalf of British imperialism to secure a temporary truce with America in order to give time for better preparation, to secure the most effective fighting strength of armaments, to utilise the momentary breathing

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space in order to strike down the colonial revolts and carry through the preparations against the Soviet Union; and all the time the acts of war preparation are accompanied by the words of peace. In this way the Labour Government performs its supreme service for imperialism, most signally shown in the London Conference—*peacefully to prepare war.*

WHAT is the essential trick in all this propaganda of "disarmament" and "limitation of armaments" which makes it so easily successful in leading all the pacifists by the nose and putting across big armaments programmes with their fervent support? There are, in fact, as any examination will show, a hundred tricks in every detail of the whole present large-scale example of this old familiar swindle: the careful exclusion and ignoring of just the most important and burning armaments issues, air and chemical warfare; the solemn renunciation or limitation of obsolete types; the actual increase in the most effective fighting types; the writing off of one or two units from enormous hypothetical paper programmes of ships that have never been built, and calling the result "reduction," when the material reality is increase; and so forth. But all these are still incidental details of the swindle; they do not yet bring us to the heart of the issue. It is perfectly conceivable that an actual limitation of armaments may in a given situation and for a given period be in the interests of imperialism, and yet not represent any weakening of the war danger, but on the contrary its intensification, as the nearer approach to war makes mutual hostility and suspicion against the slightest sign of excess building more intense. It is thus obvious that, if every incidental trick and deception were exposed and removed, if some measure of genuine limitation were actually to take place, the real deception would still remain unaffected; pacifism would still remain, in the name of "limitation of armaments," tied to the service of imperialist armaments. The root of the issue lies deeper. The real deception in the whole propaganda of "disarmament" and "limitation of armaments" as the means to prevent war lies in the *assumption that armaments are the cause of war*, and that in consequence any

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step to limit armaments is a step to the prevention of war. From this assumption, which completely conceals the real fight against war, the rest follows.

KAUTSKY, that is to say the bourgeois liberal who to-day writes in the skin of the former Marxist Kautsky, roundly declares in his recent brochure on *Armaments and Social Democracy* (Berlin, 1928) that—

> war arises, not from any concrete point of difference, but from the atmosphere of armaments and alliances, which are created for the purpose of preserving peace.

Here we have the exact opposite of the Marxist view of war. War is not seen as the outcome of modern capitalism, *i.e.*, of imperialism, whose policy and whole character of expansion and increasing competition inevitably leads to conflict. On the contrary, imperialist policy is presented as aiming at "preserving peace." In consequence, "armaments and alliances" appear, not as the expressions of the imperialist drive to war, but as independent factors, which, in defiance of the will of imperialism, lead to war. 1914 becomes, not the expression of its epoch, but an historical accident. This is the typical farrago of nonsense of bourgeois liberal pacifism which Social Democracy now utilises. What is the consequence? The revolutionary fight against imperialism and war is denied. Imperialism is extolled, and must be supported, as a factor of peace. In place of the fight against war is set up a will o' the wisp of "disarmament" and "limitation of armaments," to be achieved through the forms of imperialism. On this basis is erected the comedy that has already been successfully maintained through the sixty odd sessions of the interminable "Preparatory Committee" at Geneva without exhaustion, and that is now being staged anew at the London Conference, at which imperialist armaments are solemnly being sanctified by the imperialist statesmen in the name of "disarmament." *The pacifist idealist sees the ships which he is told are not going to be built, and thrills at the triumph of peace. The imperialist realist sees the material facts of the ships that are being built and the concrete programmes, for the execution of which the*

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support of pacifism has been secured, and has his own more cogent reasons for satisfaction. Imperialism wins, and pacifism is revealed as its servant.

IT is here that we come to the root of bourgeois pacifism, *i.e.*, of all the many varieties of pacifism of the Liberal-Labour type, of the League of Nations Union, of the I.L.P., of Angellism, of the No More War Movement, &c. Bourgeois pacifism in its leading expressions, as at Geneva, is nine-tenths open hypocrisy; that is, the statesmen who preach it are active and conscious directors of the war machine and of imperialist war policy. But this hypocrisy, to be successful, must build upon a basis of belief in large strata of the petit-bourgeoisie and also of the workers; and it is this basis of belief which is important. The root fallacy of bourgeois pacifism at its most sincere is that it seeks artificially and abstractly *to isolate the question of war.* War is not seen as a social outcome which can only be removed by removal of the causes, but as a mistaken or wicked policy which can be overcome by suitable propaganda or the creation of machinery. The existing framework of society, *i.e.*, imperialism, is accepted without question; and within this framework it is attempted to conduct, by propaganda, appeals to sentiment, reason or interest, construction of machinery, holding of conferences, &c., the campaign against war. From this follows the endless Sisyphus' labour of bourgeois pacifism. The whole class structure of society breathes war at every pore. For every ounce of eloquent propaganda against war, a ton of material reality of the driving forces of existing society leads to war, inevitably carrying ideology with it at the suitable moment (the turnover within a week in 1914 of a 99 per cent. popular opinion against war in every country to a nearly as universal acceptance of war as necessary). Every elaborate constructive machinery that is set up, with the best intentions and aspirations of their idealist advocates, becomes in the hands of imperialism instruments of imperialist manœuvring and war-preparation (the League of Nations, the Kellogg Pact, disarmament conferences, &c.). Only that force in society which fights against the driving forces of existing society, which raises

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the whole question of the existing social structure, the revolutionary working class, is able to conduct the fight against war. Whoever supports imperialism must inevitably support war. It is impossible to fight war without fighting directly imperialism and the imperialist state machine. This is the rock on which all bourgeois pacifism breaks.

IMPERIALISM is built on armed violence. It is a system of society based on class subjection, on colonial subjection, and on a world fight for spoils between the rival imperialist groups. For all these purposes it requires armaments: first, to maintain class subjection; second, to maintain colonial subjection; and third, to maintain the interests of a given group, either by threat of force, or by war if necessary, against rival groups. The use of this armed force is continuous. It is always latent at every point in the system, as any large strike shows. It comes into the open at any point of crisis. It is the weapon behind diplomacy. It is the criterion of a "Great Power." It is continuously active at one point or another of the system; now the suppression of a colonial revolt, now the massing of warships at a critical point, now a frontier war, now the subjugation of newly-conquered territory. "Small wars," colonial wars, are ceaseless. War is thus not some sudden, inexplicable outburst and accident, as bourgeois pacifism sees it, and solemnly discusses methods to "provide against" it, such as security pacts, leagues, arbitration or individual refusals of service, while all the time the daily war of imperialist oppression goes forward, without any pretence of "security" for the colonial peoples, "arbitration" in the cases of high-handed imperialist bullying, or all the vows of individual refusals of service diminishing one whit this oppression (it is characteristic of imperialist pacifism only to be aware of the question of war when the metropolitan countries are directly affected). War and armaments are an inseparable accompaniment of imperialism. War is a continuous process under the conditions of imperialism; and the large-scale wars are only the culmination of a continuous chain, the links of which are already being forged.

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IT is, therefore, no casual contradiction or inconsistency that the Labour Government, at the same time as it should be engaged in its "pacific disarmament" negotiations with America leading up to the present Conference, should be actively engaged in violent suppression in Palestine or Arabia, Samoa or Nigeria, sending warships to China, or insisting on its garrison rights in Egypt, any more than that the United States should be similarly engaged in Haiti, Nicaragua or the Philippines. This is all part of a single system. Alike in the pacific-sounding, highly-polite negotiations with the powerful America, and the unconcealed and brutal violence towards more defenceless peoples, the Labour Government is acting and manœuvring on behalf of British imperialism, according to the circumstances of the situation. Between the two world-robbers negotiations and bargaining are necessary; for the conflict between them is too serious to be lightly opened out without much previous manœuvring and preparation. But any temporary agreement they may reach on armaments is based on the assumption of the maintenance of their world-domination. "Minimum requirements" must be maintained; this is common ground. Anglo-American "parity" is based on extreme "disparity" for the rest of the world. And precisely because any agreement reached is thus only an agreement between two world-robbers, it has no element of stability; the whole conditions governing it are explosive, alike from without and from within.

IMPERIALISM requires armaments. But imperialism also requires pacifism. And in the technique of modern imperialism the latter plays an ever more important part, as has been increasingly demonstrated ever since the Tsar's rescript of 1898 and the hypocrisy of the Hague Conference right on to the far more elaborate and complicated hypocrisies of the present-day League of Nations, Kellogg Pacts, Disarmament Preparatory Committees, World Courts, Briand-MacDonald oratory and Naval Limitation Conferences. For it is the character of modern imperialist war, as opposed to the old dynastic wars, and also to the wars of the classic capitalist period, that they

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require mass participation, whether at the front or behind the lines. But it is one thing to secure the passive subjection of the masses in their daily exploitation; it is another thing to place arms in their hands and secure their willing co-operation in their own slaughter, instead of turning against their common enemy. Indeed, since the experience of the last war, the modern tendency is again to limitation of the actual fighting forces, to highly-equipped, highly-trained, picked forces, rather than the mass armies. But in this new mechanised basis the mass-co-operation in the war industries behind the lines becomes only the more important for the successful prosecution of war. And it is in this securing of mass-co-operation for their own destruction that lies the rôle of pacifism for imperialism. In the period of war-preparation pacifism is in high favour and officially encouraged (the glut of pacifist "war-books" depicting the horrors of war —no description of the horrors of war has ever held a people back from war in the moment of crisis; the real revolutionary propaganda is basically different, namely, to show the real enemy to fight). The fog of pacifism puts the consciousness of the masses to sleep from seeing the actual war-preparations that are going forward in cold blood. And when the moment of crisis comes it has provided the psychological basis for war, the conviction that the ideals of the statesmen are pacifist, that the war is caused by the criminal aggression of the enemy, that it is a final blow for freedom and world-peace, &c. This is the task which the Liberal Party accomplished for the war of 1914. And this is the task which the Labour Party is to-day performing for the coming war, and which can only be defeated by the strength of the revolutionary working-class struggle against the Labour Party and against the Labour Government.

IMPERIALISM is the basis of the Labour Party, and, therefore, the Labour Party is and can only be a war party. This was seen with complete clearness from the outset by Webb, the ideological father of the Labour Party, already in 1900 over the South African War, at a time when the majority of the leaders of the Labour Party still thought themselves to be in opposition, and Fabian imperialism was still a term of reproach.

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At that time the old nineteenth-century Liberal pre-imperialist traditions of unchallenged world monopoly, which were decked out in the dress of pacific free trade internationalism, were still widely current. It became necessary to replace these by a new ideology, and the Liberal-Imperialist group was formed to carry out this task. It is significant that at the original inauguration of this group, at a dinner to Asquith, the personnel included, according to *The Times* report, Asquith, Haldane, Grey, Reading, Runciman and Sidney Webb. Here we see the complete unity of leadership of the systematic imperialist penetration of the pacifist Liberal-Labour ranks. From this group came the Asquith-Haldane-Grey combination to dominate the Liberal Cabinet of 1906-14, and, under cover of the pacifist majority, to prepare the war of 1914. And from this group equally came Haldane and Webb still to play their part in the Labour Cabinet of 1924. The imperialist permeation of both the Liberal and Labour Parties was equally successful. By 1914 the Labour Party had reached to full consciousness of its war rôle. By 1924 the Labour Party, under the watchful tutelage of Asquith, could already take the full reins of imperialism, and was making the pace in imperialist armaments competition by the laying down of the five cruisers. And with 1930 the Labour Government is advancing yet further on the path of preparation of the coming war.

THE programme of the Labour Party in regard to armaments and war was set out with exceptional clearness in a memorandum to the Second International on the question of disarmament a couple of years back. Total disarmament, it was pointed out, could no doubt be regarded as an ideal, but it was impracticable, since armaments were necessary for the maintenance of "law and order" (*i.e.*, imperialist domination). The correct aim should be the abolition of "competitive national armaments"; that is to say, armaments should be limited to the requirements for three purposes: (a) "the maintenance of internal order"; (b) "the maintenance of order in the colonial possessions"; and (c) "co-operation in defence of the common peace against a proven aggressor as

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defined in the Protocol." Here we see the essential objectives of imperialist armaments set out with full consciousness: first, the maintenance of class subjection; second, the maintenance of colonial domination; third, the prosecution of imperialist war (under a League of Nations sanction). But the third point is given a peculiar twist; and this twist is so significant and characteristic of the whole present position, of both the dilemma and the deception of Social Democracy to-day, that it deserves special attention.

SOCIAL Democracy, which is the agency and reflex of imperialism in the working class, fully accepts the responsibilities of imperialism, adopts as its own the objectives of imperialist policy, recognises the " duty " of maintaining domination in India or Egypt by force, &c. It has, therefore, no hesitation in proclaiming the first two objectives of imperialist armaments, the maintenance of class subjection and the maintenance of colonial subjection. But for the very same reasons Social Democracy, which is peculiarly concerned with the task of defeating the working-class revolution, is concerned and anxious at the prospect of inter-imperialist antagonism, in which it correctly sees the revolutionary menace. For this reason it endeavours in principle to reconcile inter-imperialist antagonism; it sets before itself the ideal of " Ultra-Imperialism." In consequence it desires and proclaims the ideal that war should be a war of " imperialism as a whole," of united imperialism, or, in its own language, " co-operation in defence of the common peace against a proven aggressor as defined in the Protocol," *i.e.*, a League of Nations war. Such a war would be a war of the League of Nations against the Soviet Union. This would represent the ideal war from the point of view of Social Democracy, and it is such a war that it above all prepares and is especially fitted to lead. But at the same time it is not able to confine its activities to this channel. For in fact " Ultra-Imperialism " is a myth. The inequality of imperialist development compels the continuation and intensification of inter-imperialist antagonisms. And the complete union of Social Democracy with imperialist policy compels it in practice to drive forward inter-imperialist antagonisms (the

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spectacle of Snowden at the Hague). The League of Nations proves to be, not "Ultra-Imperialism," but one imperialist grouping, dominated by Britain and France, among others. And in consequence the language of war "in defence of the common peace," the "international police war" so lovingly spoken of by the Labour Party pacifists, becomes, not only the cover for war against the Soviet Union, but also in fact the cover for inter-imperialist war.

THE London Conference peculiarly illustrates this situation. The "minimum requirements" of armaments, *i.e.*, the minimum requirements for imperialism—this is alike the basis of the Labour Party programme and of the London Conference. These minimum requirements are openly discussed in terms of "policing" sea-routes, maintaining "order" in the colonies, or conducting a necessary war against an "enemy of civilisation," *i.e.*, the Soviet Union. So far there can be a certain form of collaboration against the common enemy. But these minimum requirements are necessarily also the basis of inter-imperialist war. The one cannot be separated from the other. There is no absolute measure or standard of these minimum requirements. The Admiralty may speak in 1927 of seventy cruisers and in 1929 of fifty; at one time of a Two-Power Standard and at another of a One-Power Standard. All this depends on the situation, on the balance of forces, on future antagonists and relative strength. The minimum requirements for the maintenance of imperialism are also the minimum requirements for inter-imperialist war. It is the same to British imperialism whether the menace to its domination comes from Indian national revolt or from American imperialist expansion; both alike have to be fought. The Labour Party, in undertaking the task of maintaining imperialist domination, necessarily also undertakes the task of inter-imperialist war.

THE limitation of armaments is presented by the Labour Party as a step towards the diminution of inter-imperialist antagonisms. It is in fact the opposite; but there lies behind this plea a measure of truth which is

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important to note. In so far as the London Conference is successful, the way forward will have been cleared a step further for the temporary collaboration of the imperialist Powers against the Soviet Union. This is the most important immediate significance of the Conference for the world proletariat. But this does not mean that inter-imperialist antagonisms pass into the background. On the contrary, this limitation is precisely the mark of intensified antagonism and war-preparation. First, it clears the ground for more scientific war-preparation. The war budgets are relieved of the expense of maintaining an excessive weight of obsolete or doubtful fighting types, which may never be used, and can concentrate on the most effective fighting weapons, on the new "pocket battleships," on air armaments, on poison gas, on tanks and mechanised units. (The pacifists have been so completely caught in this trap that we find the pacifist Brailsford and the I.L.P. solemnly pleading for the great humane reform of the renunciation of battleships on the grounds that cruisers have now been proved to be more effective fighting types!) Second, it prepares the ideological ground for war; it proves the pacific aims of the Labour Government, and so provides the moral case for war when war comes. In this prior preparation of the pacifist moral case for war, British and American imperialism, through the mouths of the pacifist MacDonald and the Quaker Hoover, are as busily trying each to outdo the other as in the parallel fields of armaments building.

WHAT, then, is the outcome of the "pacific" rôle of the Labour Government? The outcome is precisely to *sanctify the future war*. War is sanctified through the holy water of the League of Nations. Armaments are now to be equally sanctified through the solemn and binding decisions of the London Conference. War and armaments are thus piously written into the covenant of pacifism; they are firmly fixed as corner stones of the pacifist temple; who dares to question them is an enemy of peace. This is the final outcome of the propaganda of "disarmament" and of the "outlawry of war." And why? Because the unspoken basis of all this propaganda is the acceptance and maintenance of imperialism. So long as imperialism main-

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tains its armed domination, all talk of disarmament is not only a lying delusion, but it is direct propaganda of passive servitude to imperialism, and, therefore, support of imperialism, which means war. Only when imperialism is overthrown and disarmed, when the workers have won power throughout the world, can disarmament be realised. Until then, the propaganda of disarmament and peace under the conditions of imperialism is the very technique of war-preparation. On no ground does the Labour Government need more to be fought than on its lying "pacific" rôle, which is in reality the rôle of preparing the coming war.

R. P. D.

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THE WORLD CRISIS AND TRADE UNIONISM

By JOHN A. MAHON

THE Sixth Session of the Central Council of the Red International of Labour Unions, held in Moscow from December 16 to 24, dealt with five questions: (1) The Lessons and Perspective of the Economic Struggles; (2) The T.U.U.L. in the U.S.A.; (3) The Unitary Confederation of Labour in U.S.A.; (4) The Red Trade Unions in Czecho-Slovakia; and (5) Preparations for the Fifth World Congress of the R.I.L.U.

The discussion on the first question comprised a review of the whole situation in which the revolutionary trade unions, oppositions and minorities are working, an outline of the perspectives of the near future and the sketching of the consequent tactics of the R.I.L.U. and its sections. It is first necessary to present a summary of the analysis of the world situation and then to deal with the particular directives for the British Minority Movement.

The main material before the Central Council consisted of theses prepared by Comrades Losovsky and Merker, together with the two reports introducing these theses and their replies to the discussion. The following is an attempt to summarise the principal contributions to the discussion in so far as they were accepted by the Central Council.

The Accelerated Development of the World Economic Crisis

The Central Council regarded as of the greatest significance the rapid development of the economic crisis in the United States of America. The spectacular Stock Exchange crash constituted a vivid illustration of the degree to which the downward tendency of capitalist production in the U.S.A. has already developed. This decline in production, first evidenced in the early part of 1929, has steadily intensified since the summer, and the magnitude of the Stock Exchange crash, which wiped out 50,000 million dollars of stock "values," no less than 43 per cent. of the total

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"values" of U.S. corporation stocks, shows clearly the extent and the intensity of the disintegration of capitalist stabilisation in the most "prosperous" capitalist country in the world and demonstrates the impossibility of planned economy under capitalism. The crash proves that here is no temporary interruption of production, but a deep-seated crisis resulting from the insoluble contradiction between the growing productive power and the declining markets available to U.S. capitalism. The downward tendency will in turn be accelerated by the crash, and mass unemployment with a still fiercer rationalisation drive and consequent rapid intensification of class struggle is at hand in the United States.

The effects of the U.S.A. economic crisis are already beginning to be felt beyond its frontiers, and its development will rapidly precipitate severe crises in European countries. The marked depression existing in Austria, Poland, Germany and Czecho-Slovakia has already been deepened, while in Britain the most serious apprehension as to the future has been voiced by the leading financial journals. The rapid contraction in the internal market of the U.S.A. will drive its capitalists to concentrate on the development of the export trade of manufactured goods and machinery of all kind to such an extent that previous exports will be "the merest wavelets compared with the tide that is to come." (London *Economist.*)

The Central Council therefore characterised the U.S. crisis as "*the starting point for the new, sharp, world economic crisis drawing near.*"

This maturing of the world crisis of capitalism means a terrific accentuation of the rationalisation drive in every country, and a fiercer struggle for new markets, for colonies, and for spheres of influence. The internal and external relations of the imperialist powers will grow more and more tense, the increasing economic difficulties bring intensified class struggle and the consequent intensified inter-imperialist rivalry will bring rapidly nearer the danger of war.

Side by side with this growing capitalist crisis is to be seen the rapid economic growth of Socialist industry in the Soviet Union under the régime of the dictatorship of the proletariat

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led by the Communist Party. This economic progress is being accomplished not at the expense of the health and strength of the workers but as a result of the planned organisation of production, and brings with it improved working conditions, improved living conditions, cultural and material raising of working-class standards, reduction in unemployment, reduction in the working day. The Five-Year Plan has as its objective the task of turning an agrarian country, inheriting the most backward technical and material conditions, into a Socialist country, an industrialised country. The progress made in the first year has greatly exceeded the steps set in the Five-Year Plan. This has been accomplished owing to the unparalleled wave of enthusiasm and activity for Socialist construction displayed by the workers, demonstrated in the widespread development of Socialist competition and the organisation of "shock" troops in the productive enterprises, together with close control by special commissions elected in the factories of the whole of the State, trade union, co-operative and economic apparatus. The workers are thus completely confounding the lack of faith displayed by the Right Wing who opposed the Five-Year Plan as being impracticable and beyond the resources of the Soviet Union. So great has been the progress that the slogan "Complete the Five-Year Plan in Four Years" is now being determinedly raised all over the U.S.S.R. In particular is to be noted the advance of Socialist industry on the agricultural front, hitherto the reserve of the capitalist elements in the U.S.S.R. The development of enormous collective farms, the mechanisation of agriculture by the use of huge quantities of tractors, and the rapid extension of electrification is bringing with it the mobilisation of large numbers of poor and middle peasants in socialist and co-operative farming, at the same time sharpening the class struggle in the villages against the kulaks who, driven hard by the advance of socialist agriculture, are in come cases resorting to acts of armed violence.

Extremely important measures for the advancement of the Plan are the introduction of the Five-Day continuous working week and the seven-hour day. In the current year no less than 51 per cent. of the workers will be transferred to the seven-hour day, and before the conclusion of the Five-Year period the entire

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working class will be on this basis. The continuous working week involving non-stop production also involves cultural and educational developments of the greatest importance. The human unit of production is no longer an individual but a crew of five, of whom one rests each day. By this system a great step forward against the monotony of certain phases of machine production is accomplished, and the participation by all workers in the higher technical and managerial positions is greatly accelerated. The growth of production, the industrialisation of the country, is accompanied by the growth of the working class numerically as well as culturally. The rate of this growth makes it clear that the slogan of catching up with the economic development of the most advanced capitalist countries is well on the way to accomplishment in the U.S.S.R.

This growth of the Soviet Union side by side with the intensification of the crisis in the capitalist world makes ever sharper the world contradiction between the disintegrating capitalist system whose "stabilisation" is visibly crumbling, and the upward developing socialist economy in the U.S.S.R. The sharpening of this contradiction brings closer and closer the danger of imperialist armed attack on the Soviet Union, a danger which intensifies as the economic difficulties in the capitalist countries become more and more pressing.

Effects of the New Crisis on the Labour Movement

This developing crisis in capitalist production will mean a new crisis in the Social Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions. The new rationalisation drive will in turn intensify the already rapidly rising wave of resistance among the workers, whose preliminary stirrings are already witnessed in strike movements in every country. The fascist activity of the reformist leaders in endeavouring to repress this wave of struggle will intensify the contradictions between the leaders of the Social Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions and the workers who are still members of these organisations and under their influence.

The new crisis will mean the lowering of the standards of living of the entire working class, will throw millions of workers

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into the ranks of the unemployed, thus bringing new mass battalions into the political struggle. The class struggle will thereby gain both fresh scope and a different character, since it will be directed on a world scale, not only against the consequences of the new crisis but against the system producing the crisis. The tremendous economic battles whose advent is thus inevitable will develop into real revolutionary struggles, and in a number of countries the near future will witness the direct revolutionary struggle for power.

The development of rationalisation is drawing new strata of the working class into industry, large numbers of women and young workers, while at the same time increasing the number and proportion of unskilled workers. The majority of these strata are outside the reformist trade union organisations and have displayed in recent struggles a fighting tenacity showing that they constitute most valuable new forces for the revolutionary movement.

The wave of working-class resistance to the speeding-up drive and lower standards of working and living is now turning into an offensive on the part of the revolutionary labour movement against the capitalist system. The Central Council declared that in *scope* this new upsurge is already greater than the upheaval of 1919-20. In addition to Europe the strike wave has already embraced the whole of the East (China, Japan, Indonesia, India), both the Latin-American countries and the North-American Continent, Australia and Africa (Gambia, Kenya, the Belgian Congo, South Africa). In *intensity* this wave is not yet as high as 1919-20, but the rapid maturing of the economic crisis will ensure this development, and the existence of the Communist Parties and R.I.L.U. sections in many countries where no revolutionary organisation existed in 1919-20, together with the great steps towards the Bolshevisation of many of the parties, present a factor of the greatest importance in raising the struggle to a higher level.

Now the chief weapon in the hands of the capitalists is the reformist trade union machine, which has become fused with the State machinery at whose operating levers stand in a number of countries the Social Democratic leaders, who endeavour to beat

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down the rising wave of struggle by more and more outrageous acts of social-fascist violence against the workers.

This has developed to the degree of the direct organisation of the work of breaking strikes by every means from supplying blacklegs, bringing in the police, handing over militant workers to the capitalist apparatus, to open murder of leaders and massacre of strikers. This fascist activity is now not only carried on by the higher and middle organs of the reformist trade unions, but is actively participated in by the local and factory officials, members of committees, &c., who carry this strike-breaking policy direct on to the job, into the workers' meetings, and on to the strike committees. This situation makes it necessary to redouble all efforts to win the masses of the trade union membership for the line of the R.I.L.U. and to lead them against the blackleg apparatus now working as a part of the capitalist State and Trust machinery.

The Significance and Perspective of the Economic Struggles and the Political Mass Strike

The Central Council summed up the lessons of the strikes which have taken place since the Fourth World Congress as proving:—

(1) A development in the Labour Movement from the defensive to the offensive.
(2) Despite their apparent economic character all the strikes are of a profound political, general class nature.
(3) The unorganised workers, women and youth, take an exceptionally active part.
(4) The degree of radicalisation of the workers in the various countries, industries and districts varies from first symptoms of awakening activity to mass revolutionary struggles.
(5) The further advance of the working class demands the smashing of the reformist trade union bureaucracy.

The scattered nature of the recent struggles does not deprive them of their profoundly symptomatic character—they are the vanguard struggles heralding the gigantic battles between capital and labour which the economic crisis will bring in its train. The recent strikes have been notable for the stubbornness displayed on both sides, for the direct conflict between the workers and the State machinery and social fascism, for the new fighting methods

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and determined readiness for sacrifices of the workers. This indicates not only objective but also subjective grounds for mass political struggles as the crisis advances.

The study of these strike experiences, the careful examination of our mistakes and weaknesses in their leadership, are of the most tremendous significance in order that the adherents of the R.I.L.U. may adequately prepare for their work of leading the coming economic struggles into a conscious class offensive against capitalism—the mass political strike.

In the present period, when capitalism, its very existence deeply undermined, its decline more and more accelerated, calls to its defence its last reserves, the Social Democratic parties and reactionary trade unions, every strike for "economic" demands is a blow at the capitalist régime, a political act of a class character. There can be no purely "economic" strike. Wages, hours, working conditions, are political questions of the first magnitude. Consequently, the alliance of capitalists, Social-Democrats and reactionary trade union leaders and State machinery reacts most violently to even the smallest strike movement, the State forces are mobilised, the workers savagely attacked. Therefore the question of the mass political strike is not to be approached from the aspect of super-imposing some "political" demands on top of "economic" demands of a local or district strike. There is no artificial separation between the economic and political demands around which the mass strike must be developed. The question for the R.I.L.U. sections is to find the means to extend and deepen the isolated strikes, to draw in more and more workers, to raise the revolutionary consciousness and determination of the masses, to establish revolutionary discipline, to concentrate the energy and striking force of the masses in blow after blow at the capitalist régime.

The Fight against the Right Wing and the Conciliators

The Central Council took note of the activity of those members and groups inside the R.I.L.U. who were opposing the decisions of the Fourth World Congress. This opposition, ranging from passivity to sabotage and even as far as attempts to split the revolutionary trade union movement, based itself on

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the reformist conception that the "stabilisation" of capitalism would be consolidated and extended, that a period of peaceful development covering decades was in prospect.

The recent events, particularly the U.S. crisis, have demonstrated the complete falsity of this perspective, especially wrecking the theory of the "exceptional" situation of the U.S.A. capitalism.

This opposition to the revolutionary line of the Fourth Congress, the reluctance to fight the reformist trade union bureaucracy, includes all the remnants of reformist ideology in our ranks, together with the anarchist and syndicalist tendencies. Of the deepest significance is the fact that all the varied tendencies and shades finding their common ground in opposition to the operation of the Fourth Congress line unite in their hatred and denunciation of the Communist International, in their repudiation of the ideas of Marx and Lenin. The sharpening class struggle, the vital necessity for *action*, on one side or the other, is applying the acid test to every member of the R.I.L.U. No longer is it possible to maintain a position of verbal loyalty to the revolutionary movement, of adherence "in principle" of abstract declarations; now the test is action in the day-to-day struggle and it cannot be avoided by either astuteness or innocence.

The Central Council issued a clear warning to all the oppositional elements. The situation is so serious, the wave of struggle rising so rapidly, decisive battles so imminent, that the preparation of our forces must go ahead with the maximum rapidity and every trace of reformist ideology and practice ruthlessly eliminated from our ranks.

The representatives of the new leadership of the Soviet T.U.C. made most decisive declarations on the struggle against the remnants of the Right in the Soviet trade unions, prominent among whose mistakes were the persistent under-estimation of the rôle of the R.I.L.U. and the persistence in attempts to operate the tactics of united front from above with the national reformist trade union centres long after the period for these tactics had passed. The representatives of the Soviet T.U.C. reported most definitely the determination of the Soviet trade

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unions to render every support to the R.I.L.U. and the decisions of the Fourth World Congress.

The Work of the R.I.L.U.

The immediate and vital task of the revolutionary trade unions, oppositions and minority movements is to carry out the independent revolutionary preparation, initiation and organisation of the strikes, to thus secure the leadership of the strike wave and to develop it into the political mass strike against the capitalist-reformist-fascist régime.

The most careful study of the recent strike experiences, the exposure of all mistakes and the understanding of the reasons why these mistakes were committed, are vitally necessary parts of this work. This self-critical analysis of our work must be carried on continuously, not behind closed doors, but in front of the broad masses of the workers who will then be brought closer to us and understand the difference between the R.I.L.U. and the reformists.

The rôle of the Committee of Action, the all-embracing organ for the leadership of the strike, has yet to be fully comprehended and far more work done for the establishment of these organs of struggle and the fullest development of their capability.

The continuous lagging behind the workers, being taken by surprise when strikes break out, under-estimation of the fighting spirit and capacity of the workers, is the biggest hindrance to effective strike work by the R.I.L.U. sections. Another serious defect is the persistence of reformist methods of conducting strikes—refusal to extend, reliance on strike pay, passivity, constitutionalism and trade union legalism, placing the safety of the trade union apparatus before the necessities of the strike struggle, refusal to form all-in Strike Committees, Committees of Action elected from the masses, limitation of the strike leadership to trade union members, often even to those appointed by the trade union apparatus, persistence of efforts at united front with reformist officialdom and continuance of the line of "make the reformist leaders fight" in various concealed and open forms.

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The persistence of these mistakes, nearly two years after the Fourth Congress, indicates the urgent and vital necessity for a vigorous educational campaign in our own ranks explaining concretely the significance of our line of independent leadership. These continued mistakes are due to the fact that large numbers of members entered the ranks of the revolutionary R.I.L.U. steeped in reformist and social-democratic ideas with which they have never broken. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue, the mass movement is rapidly rising, the R.I.L.U. is already behind in its work of securing the leadership of the economic struggles, and the most ruthless fight against the continuation of the opposition to the line of the Fourth Congress, and against the attempts at conciliation with this opposition, is a vital part of the work of establishing the independent leadership of the R.I.L.U. This fight must be conducted in an open manner, in front of the broad masses in order that the line can be clearly understood. This does not mean that the rank and file workers, who do not understand the line or who are not convinced, will be expelled, but it does mean that the R.I.L.U. sections will ruthlessly remove from their positions those *leaders* who persist in open or concealed hostility, opposition, or sabotage of the revolutionary line. "We do not need any verbal recognition of the revolutionary line, we want it carried out in a practical way in the everyday fight."

Here arises the critical question of the serious shortage of active workers. This is a great handicap in view of the number and extent of our tasks. It is largely due to a further example of the persistence of reformist ideas—the refusal to draw in new elements to leading and responsible positions on the grounds of inexperience, fear of mistakes, &c. We can and shall be able to secure large numbers of enthusiastic new elements if we go for them to the place where the struggle is going on, to the factories, to the strikers. The best and most serious elements, irrespective of their age or previous experience, must be given this share of the responsible positions in our movement. Of course, mistakes will be made, but they will not be the mistakes of petrifying, decaying elements unable to shed themselves of reformist ideas, but the mistakes of new fighters anxious to operate the revolu-

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tionary line in the present difficult situation, and will be rapidly corrected. The best school for revolutionary leadership is the everyday struggle.

The definite checking up of the operation of all decisions arrived at is essential. The decisions of the R.I.L.U. and the leading conferences of its sections require to be popularised among the workers, to be carefully studied and discussed, and to be carried out in the day-to-day struggle. Frequent self-critical examination of the progress made in practical application of the decisions is a definite obligation on all sections. The principle of revolutionary competition must be introduced into the work in such a manner that it becomes a means of developing real united front activity in the factories and of drawing in masses of workers into the active support of the line of the R.I.L.U.

The long-standing "scissors," now wider than ever, between the influence of the R.I.L.U. and the organisational consolidation of this influence in terms of membership, was seriously considered. The objective situation is now more favourable for the closing of the scissors, and the R.I.L.U. will regard the consolidation of the influence of the sections into the recruiting and retaining of a dues-paying membership as an important test, an obligation which must be carried out and reported upon to the Fifth Congress.

This recruiting demands the basing of our activity on the industrial enterprises, especially the large enterprises and the development of united front work in the heart of the masses. Here the question of Factory Committees, of their links with the workers, of their connections with the R.I.L.U. sections, assumes the greatest importance. As yet the organisational forms for the consolidation of the sections on the basis of the line of the Fourth Congress have not been developed, they must be developed, and their only basis is the factory.

The international character of the economic struggles must be fully realised and all sections of the R.I.L.U. work to mobilise the workers of one country for action in support of those of another. Especially is this important in connection with the struggles of the colonial workers, for whom the practical aid of the proletariat of the imperialist powers is of decisive significance.

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THE SITUATION IN IRELAND

By T. J. BELL

ENGELS once remarked in a letter that all the petty-bourgeois leaders of the peasant masses in Ireland were unanimous in declaring that the "Holy Island" was quite different from any other country inasmuch as the "carnal class-struggle" did not apply to Ireland. Unfortunately, even to-day, this conception of Ireland is quite widespread in Britain.

When Ireland is mentioned, eyebrows are raised and shoulders shrugged, or one meets a gushing, sentimental eulogy of the "Irish fighting spirit," or of the "seven-century-old struggle against England"; at best one meets with non-critical praise for Jim Connolly, the Dublin uprising of 1916, and the struggle against British imperialism of 1918-1923. What is lacking is a serious estimation of the class forces in Ireland, of the actual condition of the proletariat and working-farmers, and of the rôle that the "Irish Free State" and the "Northern (Ulster) Government" play within the British Empire, and in relation to the growing antagonisms between the imperialist powers (especially Britain and U.S.A.) leading directly to imperialist war.

Because of the indifference of the British proletariat to the brutal crushing of the Irish masses by the British ruling class, the Irish proletariat and working-farmers were driven into the arms of the Irish Nationalist bourgeoisie, and, later on, of the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie. Owing to this indifference of the British proletariat, whole generations of Irish proletarians and working-farmers have spent all their energy in the service of the Irish nationalist bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes, to the detriment of the proletarian class struggle in Ireland.

* * * *

Ireland assumes special significance in this period of preparation for imperialist war which is characterised by the irreconcilable antagonism between Britain and the United States, and the preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union. The military

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significance of Ireland for England needs no emphasis. The possibility of a repetition of the 1916 uprising is not neglected by the British imperialists. Because of the possibility of Ireland being used as a hostile war base and its importance as a source of food supplies, Ireland must play a large part in the war plans of Britain. This was the basis of the creation of the Six Counties area, and the retention of the British naval bases under the 1921 Treaty. That U.S. imperialism is quite aware of this is shown by the visit of Kellogg to Ireland in the summer of last year and his refusal to visit London. This event was part of the U.S. policy of encouraging the disintegration tendencies of the national bourgeoisies of the British dominions.

British imperialism has a firm ally in the Irish bourgeoisie, but the leading party of the Irish bourgeoisie (Cumann na nGaedhael) is willing to flirt with U.S. imperialism in order to squeeze concessions from Britain and loans with which to overcome its unfavourable economic position. Fianna Fail's American orientation has its basis in De Valera's desire to maintain a semblance of opposition to Britain and thus preserve his followers among the petty-bourgeoisie, the farmers, and the proletariat. Sinn Fein (and sections of the Irish Republican Army), because of their bourgeois-nationalist ideology, indirectly support U.S. imperialism on the grounds that "England's enemy is Ireland's friend"—thus repeating in another guise their pro-German position in the last war.

* * * *

The Irish Free State set up as a result of the Treaty of 1921 is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, ruling the country in direct alliance with British imperialism. The establishment of the Free State marked the end of Sinn Fein as the party of the revolutionary national liberation movement against British imperialism. The split of Sinn Fein in 1921 was over the terms of the Treaty and not on the question of the continuation of the revolutionary-national struggle against Britain. This is shown by the fact that the counter-proposals of De Valera at that time only differed in phraseology and not in political content from the Treaty of Lloyd George and Griffiths.

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However, the opponents to the Treaty represented a section of Sinn Fein composed of petty-bourgeois elements, workers, farmers and agricultural labourers who were opposed to the abandonment of the struggle without the establishment of an Irish Republic. This element, rather than the De Valera leadership, was responsible for the uprising against the Treaty which was crushed after more than a year of civil war.

Since that time the Free State has consolidated itself, through a coalition of the Cumann na nGaedhael, the Farmers' Party, the Unionists, and the Independents, into a typical bourgeois government, representing the interests of the financiers, industrial capitalists and big farmers. Such legislation as the Coercion Laws, Censorship Laws, the consolidation of the educational system in the hands of the Catholic clergy, are characteristic of the policy of the government.

Since 1922 that section of Sinn Fein led by De Valera which opposed the Treaty has turned into a mere constitutional opposition party on the basis of the Free State, and is preparing to become the ruling party on the basis of the Treaty which it pretended to oppose. The second split of Sinn Fein in 1927, through the formation of the Fianna Fail, rid De Valera of the more intransigeant nationalist elements, and cleared the way for the entrance into the Dail and the decision to take the oath of loyalty to the British crown which was hypocritically termed "an empty formula" in order to smooth the way to the capitulation to the acceptance of the Free State. *This step was taken not to continue the revolutionary nationalist struggle against British imperialism, but to liquidate the last remnants of that struggle.*

In the 1927 election campaign, De Valera made it clear that Fianna Fail was opposed to the struggle against British imperialism when he declared that Fianna Fail would be prepared to form a government on the basis of the Free State, avoided the question of land distribution, opposed any repudiation of debts, and disguised its stand for the continuation of the payment of the Land Annuities by vaguely speaking of paying them into a central fund in Dublin. To emphasise the constitutionality of his programme he stated that "A future Republican Government could not ignore all the acts of its predecessors," *i.e.*, a policy of con-

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tinuation of the government on the basis of the Free State constitution. Since 1927 many capitalist elements have joined Fianna Fail. This development of Fianna Fail has completed the process of its abandonment of the national revolutionary struggle against British imperialism, and turned it into a "loyal opposition" on the basis of the Free State.

Undoubtedly, Fianna Fail still enjoys popular support among the petty-bourgeoisie of the city and country and among the city and rural workers, because they do not understand that Fianna Fail has abandoned the struggle against British imperialism and has become a party of the Irish bourgeoisie basing itself upon the acceptance of the Free State, ignoring the needs of the masses, and the real problems of independence from Britain, the land question, the unity of the country, &c. In order to retain this support, De Valera still continues to make gestures of opposition to British imperialism (for instance, his recent arrest in Belfast will strengthen the belief that he is fighting British imperialism), and flirts with America in order to be able to squeeze concessions from Britain, secure loans from the U.S.A., and generally keep alive the pretence of fighting British imperialism. The coming to power of Fianna Fail as the ruling party in the Free State will expose it to its followers as a counter-revolutionary party of the Irish bourgeoisie.

The remnant of the old Sinn Fein, under the leadership of Mary MacSwinney, has been reduced to an impotent group, which becomes more and more removed from reality as the Free State consolidates itself, and seeks refuge in calling together an "Irish Parliament" which adopts a "constitution" for Ireland. By this play-acting Sinn Fein attempts to hide the fact that it has ceased to be the party of the Irish masses struggling against British imperialism.

In the I.R.A. are concentrated those revolutionary nationalists who still have the idea of freeing Ireland by military action. It contains proletarian elements, agricultural labourers and petty-bourgeois elements, and its confused ideology is the expression of its heterogeneous composition. Because of its close relation with the workers and poor farmers and its opposition to the desertion of the bulk of the nationalist movement to an alliance

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with British imperialism, there has developed inside the I.R.A. a group which sees that the only force that can carry the revolution forward is the proletariat and poor farmers. At the same time, there are groups dominated by a bourgeois viewpoint who only visualise the continuation of the struggle as one for the realisation of the programme of Sinn Fein, *i.e.*, national freedom from Britain.

The Irish Labour Party, hitherto based upon the trade unions, has been consistently a tool of British imperialism, maintaining "neutrality" during the years of the armed struggle against Britain, aiding Lloyd George to force the acceptance of the 1921 Treaty; and, since the establishment of the Free State Parliament, has played the rôle of a loyal opposition, carrying on intrigues with every party in order to become part of the government at any cost. It has repeatedly, through Johnson, leader of the party, made public declarations which implied a willingness to abandon its programme and join with any party, if this will bring to the petty-bourgeois gang who lead it a few ministerial posts, and has assured the Irish bourgeoisie of its readiness to join in crushing any organisation which attempts to overthrow the Free State. The Labour Party is an organic part of the counter-revolutionary parties which compose the Free State Parliament.

The economic situation in the Free State is unfavourable, and is characterised by an unfavourable trade balance, a decline in industry and in agriculture, and an annual budget deficit. To meet this situation, the Government has a policy of protective tariffs, subsidies to industrial enterprises, the attraction of foreign industrial enterprises by means of subsidies, internal and foreign loans, the electrification of the country by means of the Shannon electrification scheme, and attacks on the living standards of the labouring masses of workers and poor farmers. In the Six Counties area the same unfavourable economic situation prevails: only the financial support of the British Government enables it to maintain an independent existence. In Belfast the linen industry is in a state of crisis, while the shipbuilding industry has been in a depressed state since the end of the war, and the boundary established by the 1922 Treaty is an obstacle to the development of the Belfast distributive industries which supplied a large part

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of the country before the boundary was established. In both the north and the south the proletariat is suffering from unemployment and wage cuts, while the poor farmers' lot is becoming steadily worse.

Not only is the Free State Government opposed to the confiscation of the large estates; on the contrary it demands that the farmers shall continue the payment of the Land Annuities. The Government Land Purchase and Credit Scheme works in the interests of large farmers, and the land distributed by the Land Commissions does not go to the poor and landless, but to increase the holdings of the larger farmers. The terrible economic conditions of the labouring masses in the country results in an emigration of over 30,000 persons a year. The larger farmers are organised into the Farmers' Union, and the farmers' co-operatives are capitalist organisations operated by them. The poor farmers and agricultural labourers are almost totally unorganised. In the villages the mass of misery is increasing, the struggle of the poor against the rich farmers grows steadily, while none of the parties in the Dail have a policy which holds out any hope for the poor farmers. The effects of the Shannon electrification scheme on the poor farmers will be to worsen their position. The only effective solution of the problem lies in the confiscation of the land for the benefit of those who toil on it. In order to develop the struggle of the poor farmers and connect it with the struggle of the proletariat, it is necessary to organise leagues of small farmers directed against the bourgeois parties who still find support among the toiling masses of the countryside. At the same time the organisation of the agricultural workers into an industrial union is a burning necessity which confronts the whole Irish proletariat.

The Free State Government has taken the lead in the attack on the wages, hours and conditions of the industrial workers, through the establishment of minimum wages, and through the lowering of wages and lengthening of hours in State enterprises such as road-building and on the Shannon scheme. Rationalisation of industry and transport has resulted in increased exploitation and unemployment. The decline of industry and agriculture, together with the process of rationalisation, has created an army

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of unemployed proletarians to the number of over a hundred thousand for the whole of Ireland.

The trade unions are rapidly losing members. Since 1920 the membership has declined by 30 per cent., and at present numbers about 170,000. Fully 60 per cent. of the industrial workers and 90 per cent. of the agricultural workers are unorganised. The trade unions are split up according to craft and trade, and not sufficient steps are being taken to bring about unity on an industrial basis. The leaders of the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party are typical reformists, performing loyally all the strike-breaking tasks that the capitalists demand from them. About 30,000 workers are organised in branches of British unions. The difference between the bureaucrats who lead the Irish trade unions and those of the British trade unions in Ireland is hard to find. In Ireland, as in England, the unions are dominated by a typical reformist bureaucracy. The Workers' Union of Ireland, composed of unskilled workers of various industries in the Dublin district, has a policy of class struggle, and is opposed to the dominant trade union bureaucracy ruling the other unions. However, there is no organised Trade Union Left Wing Movement carrying on the struggle against the reformists.

The essence of the present situation in Ireland is, briefly, as follows: the Irish bourgeoisie, supported by large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie of the city and country, is ruling the country through the Free State in alliance with British imperialism, by means of Cumann na nGaedhael, Farmers' Party, and National Party. The Labour Party and Fianna Fail play the rôle of "loyal opposition," but are firm supporters of the present Free State. The Sinn Fein Party is incapable of leading a revolutionary struggle against British imperialism, because it is essentially a party of bourgeois nationalism, while the I.R.A. has no programme capable of rallying the toiling masses. Only the proletariat, supported by the poor farmers, led by its own party, the Communist Party, and fighting for a Workers' and Farmers' Republic, can carry forward the struggle against British imperialism for the independence of Ireland and the unity of the country and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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THE SPEECH OF THE PROSECUTOR IN THE MEERUT CASE

[*The following is a continuation of the opening speech of the Government Prosecutor, Mr. Langford James, delivered in June, 1929, in the case against the Indian working-class leaders at Meerut. The first portion was given in the previous issue of the* LABOUR MONTHLY, *January, 1930.*]

NOW I have said that this International existed at the beginning of the war. It was also in existence at the end of the war. But by that time the Bolsheviks had captured the power in Russia and their views, as I have attempted to point out, did not coincide at all with the views of Amsterdam with whom at that time and later the name of our present Prime Minister was constantly coupled in Bolshevik literature. Therefore, an attempt was made to found another International in Russia and naturally, and as a matter of course, the persons who attempted to found it and did in fact found it were this Communist party in Russia, which had by that time increased to a larger figure than it had been before, but was still a very tiny minority. I think it is important to bear in mind the fact that this Communist International was founded by the Russian Bolshevik or Communist Party which ruled Russia at that time and that this Communist International embraced all the tenets of Bolshevism, and the views expressed by this Communist International are identically the same as the views expressed by this Communist Party of Russia.

When I come to deal with the organisation of the International, you will see, Sir, that in fact the Communist Party of Russia is a section of the International and the Communist Parties of all other countries are also sections of the International. In theory, the International can meet anywhere in Europe. In practice, it always meets in Russia ; and it must follow as a matter of common sense that Russian influence is therefore the predominant factor in this International, and when we come to deal with this organisation you

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will find that not only is it the predominant influence but it is practically the regulating and controlling influence.

Now, so much for, very briefly, the story as to the origin of this body, I will now deal as shortly with the creed and objective. Now, it may be said, I think with some truth, that the creed of Bolshevism has an old testament and a new testament. The old testament is the gospel according to Karl Marx and is exemplified, I suppose, best in the well-known Communist Manifesto issued by Karl Marx and Engels. The new testament may be said to be the gospel according to Ulianov or Lenin which, I suppose, is typified, if you can find any one book better than another—I notice Mr. Spratt selected it for the education of the youth—in *State and Revolution*.

Now, I do not propose to discuss at all the materialistic philosophy of Marx and his theory of accumulation of surplus values. I do not know whether anybody entertains any feelings of love for this somewhat antiquated philosophy, but it is unnecessary to go into it because Marx exists for the Bolshevik not on account of his philosophy of accumulation of surplus values but because of his theory or rather his theories as to (1) the class war, (2) the state, and (3) the dictatorship of the proletariat. Now, first of all, as to his theory of the class war Marx divided the world into two classes which he named the proletariat class and the capitalist or bourgeois class.

Now, it would seem that you ought to be able to get from this Communist manifesto a fairly clear definition of those two terms, seeing how important they are, but I regret to say that it is not so possible as one would have expected. The capitalists are described as the class of modern capitalist owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. That is fairly satisfactory. The proletariat is referred to in three places. First of all, may I say that the word comes from the Latin word " proletarii " as far as I know, which may be loosely translated as wasters, and referred to the people who came in from the country districts, flocked into Rome and had practically no occupation and no property. I am not throwing any stones at the proletariat at all as defined by Marx, but that is the origin of the word.

Now, to come back to Marx. He first of all says that the proletariat are the class of modern wage labourers who, having no

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means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live. Well, of course, incidentally that covers me and anybody else who merely makes a living, shall we say, by his wits. But a little later we get this further definition. " Without property, his relations to his wife and his family have no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations ; low morality and religion are to him so many bourgeois prejudices." And later again, the proletariat is described as " the lowest stratum of society."

Now, it probably would be a rough and ready description to say that the proletariat are the have-nots of this world and the other party are those who have got something. I do not pretend that this is at all a scientific description, but that is what in fact it practically comes to. The theory of Marx was that there was a bitter struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist or the bourgeoisie and certainly the Bolshevik claims that Marx said that it could not be ended except by bloody revolution.

Well, now, to come to his theory of the state. I suppose any ordinary person who thinks about the state regards it as an institution which for better or for worse, well or less well, is there to guard the liberties and rights of all the citizens in the state and see to the best of its ability that they all get fair play and equal treatment. I say that this is the sort of idea that the ordinary man would entertain with regard to the state. Now, that was not at all the theory of Marx. Marx said that the state was the organ of the ruling class and inasmuch as the bourgeoisie or capitalists or haves, or whatever you like to call them, were the ruling class, and the proletariat or have-nots never had been in power, it followed that the state was the organ of the bourgeoisie or the capitalists.

Now, the duty according to him of the proletariat in this class struggle which was going on perpetually and which would ultimately come to a head, the duty of the proletariat was to smash in pieces this state, this organ of the capitalist class. It had to be smashed in pieces. And the persons who were to take power were the proletariat. And their assumption of power was called by him the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is clear, it must be clear, to anybody that you cannot have a dictatorship of a mass in practice, however much you may have it in theory, and it is equally clear, I

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think, that a dictatorship primarily means government by one man and in any sense must mean government by a small compact little body of men, a bureau if you like. And, therefore, the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat meant that some one person or some small body of people on behalf of the proletariat should seize the government. Much stress is laid by Lenin later on the point that the proletariat had not got to capture the existing state and use *it*, but had got to smash the existing organ into pieces and erect or set up an entirely new state of their own.

Well, now, the theory goes on—and it may sound a little fantastic, at least it did to me the first time I read it, and in fact it has proved to be quite impossible in practice—but the theory goes on in this way. Having smashed the capitalist state into pieces, having set up the new rule of the dictatorship of the proletariat, you have then got to a transitional stage. This dictatorship of the proletariat is merely transitional. It is in fact, of course, the substitution of the autocratic rule of one lot of people, or what the Bolshevik considers the autocratic rule of one lot of people, by the autocratic rule of another lot of people. It is only transitional and the millennium is to be reached when there is no longer any class in the state at all. We are all exactly the same. We are all to become workers on the bench.

I am afraid that would not include your Honour, at least not in their sense. I mean we are all to become actual workers in a factory or actual workers in the field. Then we have got to the millennium of the classless community. And then what happens is this, that the state "withers away." It withers away. And I suppose you have no state in the millennium and everybody owns everything or nobody owns anything, I am not quite sure which.

Now, that is the gospel according to Marx, put as fairly as I can put it, and the important point of it, I think, is this class struggle and the fact that this dictatorship of the proletariat is only transitional. The gospel according to Lenin was concerned principally with the capturing of power by the Communist Party, that is to say the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and with this question as to the transitional stage. Lenin was a considerable authority upon both these points naturally. It was he

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who led this Red Revolution in Russia and it was he who directed the course of the Government after the revolution was effected.

To Lenin, the substitution of the proletarian state for the existing state is absolutely impossible without a violent bloody revolution. He emphasised that point in that admirable book that I told you was prescribed by Mr. Spratt for the very young, *The State and Revolution*. He emphasised that point that you cannot capture power and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat without a bloody revolution. He says that it is the duty of Communists in all countries to work steadily to bring about an armed uprising of the proletariat to overthrow the existing system of Government and seize the state. Lenin preached this gospel both before and after the armed revolution in Russia and this is the doctrine which is commemorated and glorified on Lenin Day, which is January 21 in each year, and on the anniversary of the October Revolution in each year.

I say that is the doctrine which is commemorated and glorified on those occasions and those are some of the demonstrations which the accused boast they have introduced into India. Now, I suppose that most people are acquainted to some extent with what in fact happened in Russia. These, to me, fantastic theories of Marx were pushed to their logical conclusions with a ruthless brutality which must make everybody in the world shudder. I have found in fact with the accused a book which in its proper place I will deal with, called *Bolshevism, the Dream and the Fact.* And it is interesting to note that they must have known what effect it had upon Russia, and there is no reason to suppose that they did not. But this book gives a very lurid account of the Red Terror. I will read you only two or three passages from it. (Reads.)

Mr. D. P. SINHA : What is the date and author of the book ?

Mr. LANGFORD JAMES : The author of the book is Edmund Candler, and the date of publication is 1920. The passage occurs on page 37.

Mr. D. P. SINHA : Is that going as an exhibit in the case ?

Mr. LANGFORD JAMES : That is entirely for me to decide.

Mr. D. P. SINHA : With great respect I would submit to your Honour that my learned friend in his opening address can only refer to a book of law or to a book which he proposes to file as an exhibit in the case. And if he refers to any book which does not fit into either of these two categories than I submit we have every right to draw your Honour's attention to this.

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The JUDGE : You can draw my attention to it. But I must ask you not to interrupt more than necessary because we can never get on at this rate.

Mr. Langford James—

We are all sensitive this morning.

What one cannot imagine, the physical and mental torture that followed, the cold-blooded murder not only of the aristocrats and the class that used to be called the respectable bourgeois, but peasants, working men, priests and old men.

This book gives a gruelling account of the horrible terror which followed and which is defended by Trotsky in his *Defence of Terrorism* as being a necessity and at times a necessary part of the programme of this International. For us in this court, however, I think the more important point is that this Russian revolution was a revolution which had as its object the smashing to pieces of the existing state of Government ; and indeed did in fact smash it to pieces.

If the example of Russia is to be followed in India it is essential that, as an integral part of the process, the Government of His Majesty as by law established should be smashed in pieces. Bolshevism may be, as I believe it to be, a festering sore on the face of Europe, a cruel and tyrannous autocracy masquerading under the mask of popular Government, or it may be a paradise on earth. The hard fact still remains that if Bolshevism and that system is to be introduced into India the Government of His Majesty must as a preliminary be smashed in pieces. There is no room for both of them.

Now, this Russian revolution, as I have already indicated, was carried through by a small and resolute body of men. It is not so generally understood that the present Government of Russia is carried on by a small and resolute body of men who, on their own figures, claim to be only about one and a-quarter million out of a total population of something like 180 millions. In the rural soviets, both village soviets and district soviets, the peasants have a very large footing ; in fact they have a majority. But gradually the proportion of Communists increases in the higher soviet organs, in action and they are in absolute control of all positions of power. The All-Russian Soviet is entirely dominated by the Russian Communist Party.

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It is not a fact that Russia is a happy land peopled by Communists. It is a fact that it is ruled by Communists with the help of the O.G.P.U. and the Red Army. The O.G.P.U., which used to be called the Cheka, is the police force of Russia and it is entirely of course under the control of this Communist Party, and by means of it and the Red Army the people of the country are terrorised into submission to the rule which is imposed upon them. This purposeful minority, which I have indicated governs Russia, has its counterparts in other countries, and they, as I think I have already pointed out, together make up the Comintern.

Now I have digressed somewhat, perhaps, because I remember I said that the gospel according to Lenin was concerned with two things, the capturing of the power and the transitional stage. I had dealt with the capturing of power, but I left the question of the transitional stage in abeyance. Before I deal with this question of the transitional stage according to Lenin's ideas, I want to say a word about another matter which is of extreme importance in any consideration of Bolshevism, and that is the peasant question. Now this doctrine of Karl Marx and Engels was essentially applicable and intended to be applied to industrial countries, such as England and Germany.

I think you can search the writings of Marx through and find practically no—if any very little—reference to the peasants. The theory does not lend itself to dealing with peasants. The irony of the thing is that this experiment should have been tried in a country like Russia which is essentially a peasant country. I suppose that if you searched the world over for countries which were essentially agricultural or peasant countries, the two that would head the list would be Russia and India. Lenin was consequently at an early stage confronted with the difficulty of this peasant question.

Now the peasant is usually a man who is of a very conservative frame of mind. He loves his home, he loves his country and he loves his God. In fact, he is prone to possess all those fallacious ideas which the Bolshevik desires to root out. But not only that, the peasant usually has or attempts to have a little bit of land of his own. And as a matter of fact in 1905 in Russia the reforms of Stolypin had largely increased the possibility for the peasant to have this little plot of land of his own.

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Now Lenin divides the peasants into five classes. The first is the agricultural proletariat. This group must be organised in independent organisations separated from the other groups of the rural population. Then he gets to the semi-proletariat or poor peasants. This group may be converted to the law of the proletariat if the work is properly conducted by the Communist Party. You have got the very lowest stratum, which you ought to be able to get hold of, and then you get the stratum which you might with proper attention get hold of. Then comes the small peasantry, these are small land owners, owing or renting small plots of land which satisfy the requirements of their families, and they do not therefore employ wage labour. In the transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat this group may waver in its policy. However, if the proletarian policy is firmly conducted, if the victorious proletariat deals sufficiently thoroughly with the large land owners and wealthy peasants, this group, in spite of its wavering, will, on the whole, be on the side of the proletarian revolution.

Then you get to the middle peasantry. In the economic sense these are small peasants owning or renting small plots of land which under capitalism as a general rule provide them not only with a modest income but even with the possibility of obtaining a certain superfluity, at least in good years, which they can convert into capital and large farms, frequently rising to the employment of wage labour. The wavering of this group during the period of revolution will be greater than that of the previously mentioned group. Therefore, at least in the immediate future and in the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the aim must be not so much to win this group over as to neutralise it. Then you come to the rich peasantry who are quite outside the pale. Those are the capitalist farmers operating as a general rule with a number of wage workers and bound to the peasantry only by their low cultural level and habits of life and the fact that they personally work on their farms. This group is a direct and determined enemy of the proletariat. And finally, you have the large land owner. In the *A B C of Communism*, which is a book I shall quote often, I find that there are only three classes of these peasants alluded to.

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So that, generally speaking, the Communist has to deal with the question of the peasants by dividing them into three classes: firstly, the man who is frankly a capitalist, the man who has his own land; secondly, the middle-class man who may go this way or that; thirdly, that class of hopeless people who in Russia are known as "horseless" peasants because they have no horses. I notice that Mr. Spratt, as we shall see when I come to deal with that, calls that last class the landless peasant. Now, the question was, what on earth to do with these people. I may tell you that the rich land-owning peasant, the rich peasant, is in Russian called a Kulak. It really means a vulture, and the question arose in Russia at a very early stage as to what was to be done with those Kulaks. As I have said, the matter solved itself in a practical manner at a very early stage. The Marxian theory apparently is, as I have tried to point out, that once everybody in the land is on an equal basis, classes disappear and the State withers away. Now I take it for granted that unless and until the State withers away, the Moscow clique, or this little body of men which carries on the dictatorship of the proletariat, remains in power. The transitional stage continues. Now obviously the withering away cannot begin until everybody is equal, and until you have reached the classes stage. Any form of capitalism must make this millennium an impossibility, because as long as any form of capitalism exists the transitional stage continues and the classless stage cannot possibly be reached.

Now the ordinary Bolshevik method with the capitalist, whether his capital be in land or in money, is to kill him. In the case of the big land owners that was a simple and comparatively popular panacea. But, after extensive trial, its extension to the peasant proprietor or Kulak was found not to be feasible. Yet, as I have tried to point out, to the disciples of Marx the Kulak can find no place in the ideal State. Now in the end the Kulak had to be left. The State or the party had to content themselves with taxing the Kulak very heavily. But they had to leave him there. It was also discovered to be quite impossible to run the ordinary business side of life without the small capitalist.

(*To be continued*)

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CAPITALISM AND CLASS STRUGGLE IN JAPAN—II[1]

By FREDA UTLEY

ONE consequence of the manner of Japan's emergence as a capitalist State has been that, the interests of landowners and capitalists being closely interwoven, there has never been that conflict between the two which might have led to a more democratic constitution as in England in the nineteenth century. To-day, the unstable equilibrium of Japanese capitalism, the extreme economic tension caused by her efforts to maintain herself as an Imperialist Great Power with insufficient resources, and also to some extent by the corruption amongst her governing class makes peaceful development towards democracy extremely unlikely. Capitalist stabilisation under democracy is, in fact, impossible in Japan, and the present unstable internal equilibrium is already expressed by greater pressure on the working population and on the petty-bourgeoisie and above all by an accentuated agrarian crisis.

The Japanese type of government more closely resembles that of Tsarist Russia than that of Fascist Italy. In respect to political development, Japan is in the nineteenth century. Outwardly, there is a show of liberty—since Japan always strives to appear as much like a "Western" State as possible—but the government is not responsible to the Diet and Japan is, in fact, ruled by an autocracy and a bureaucratic apparatus. Japan has created a façade of parliamentary government which, although it still deceives the foreigner, no longer deceives many of the Japanese people. Her actual Government is a thinly veiled tyranny of certain dominant groups of militarists, bureaucrats and big business men.

Residence in Japan immediately suggests the parallel with Tsarist Russia from one's day to day impressions; the exaggerated

[1] The first part of this article was printed in the preceding issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, January, 1930, pp. 30-41.

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and servile politeness of the ordinary citizen towards the police, the arrogance and wide powers of the latter, the uniformed students and the ferment of revolt in the universities and even in the schools, the "odour of sanctity" with which it is attempted to surround the Mikado—not the holy "Little Father," but the demi-god whose ancestors are worshipped as gods by the nation and whose very name is tabu. The Mikado is, of course, only a figurehead, but a figurehead which has been of very great value to the big capitalists who really hold the power in the State. This is now ceasing to be the case for there is little loyalty or reverence for him left even among the peasants.

Although a Constitution was promulgated in 1889, modelled on that of Imperial Germany, power continued to reside with the leading samurai of the two great classes—the Satsuma and Choshu—who had overthrown the Shogun and started Japan on her capitalist development. This power has been exercised indirectly through the "Genro" (the elder statesmen), who have been the Mikado's advisers and who have selected the Prime Ministers without reference to the parties in the Lower House. The Minister for War and the Minister for the Navy are to this day selected by the Genro and hold office independently of the life of governments. This system shows how strong are the survivals of feudalism in Japan.

Although democratic government is felt to be too dangerous an experiment in view of the revolutionary feeling among the masses (itself a result of the economic position) it is also felt that some safety valve must be given to that feeling, that the illusion of power to take part in the government and change social conditions must be given to the workers and peasants. Hence the institution of universal manhood suffrage in 1928. The Japanese ruling class is, in fact, divided in opinion as to whether it is safer to suppress all symptoms of discontent by the high hand or whether some show of a more liberal policy is advisable. That it can only be a show is certain, for there is no margin in the national economy for a real lightening of the burdens borne by the toiling classes nor any possibility of a solution of the agrarian crisis. Consequently, when apparent concessions are made to the outcry for popular government and social justice, steps are immediately

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taken to counteract their effect in such an undisguised fashion that no one is deceived.

A good example of this is provided by the last General Election in March, 1928. Although the Government is, anyhow, not yet responsible to the Diet the authorities were in deadly fear that the elections held for the first time under universal manhood suffrage would result in the election of many "Radicals" —the Japanese term for the representatives of revolutionary Labour. There is always widespread corruption and open bribery at the elections, but it was realised that the register was now too large to make it possible for everyone to be bribed. Accordingly, other measures were taken against the workers' and peasants' parties. The police stopped the meetings of the "proletarian parties," arrested their canvassers and tore down their election posters. Radical election posters were not even allowed to be reproduced in the Press.

The most open interference with the election occurred in Kagawa prefecture (which includes the town of Yokohama and other important industrial centres) where Oyama, the leader of the subsequently suppressed Ronoto (Labour Farmer Party), was standing. One hundred of Oyama's canvassers were arrested and subsequently freedom was offered to those who promised to secede from the Nomin Kumiai, a strong Trade Union affiliated to the Ronoto.

The police, themselves, realise perfectly well that they serve a capitalist government and must uphold its interests. The following incident related by Usahahara, a Left-Wing Labour member of the Diet, beautifully illustrates both the naïveté—or is it stupidity?—of the Japanese and the ill-disguised realities of the class war in that country: "When Mr. Yamomoto[2] called on Mr. Yorozu, Chief of the Police Bureau of Miyagi Prefecture, the Chief of the Police Bureau said: 'You are a representative of proletarian labourers and farmers. We, as representatives of the Government for the capitalists, cannot permit you to deliver speeches here.'" The remainder of Asahahara's speech further

[2]Yamomoto, a Ronoto member of the Diet, was subsequently murdered by a "patriot." He had been asking very inconvenient questions concerning the arrested Communists and was a thorn in the flesh of the Government.

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illustrates the open nature of capitalist oppression in Japan and also shows what barbarous and primitive methods are used against proletarians and peasants, these even being submitted to actual torture by the police.

The murder of Socialists in cold blood is also quite a frequent feature of Japanese public life, and the murderer either gets off altogether or is sentenced to a very short term of imprisonment. The murder of their representatives in the Diet (Yamomoto) further disillusions the workers concerning parliamentary government.

The bribery and corruption amongst the governing class, which was a conspicuous feature of Tsarist Russia, is also a most conspicuous feature of Japanese capitalism to-day. This subject was already touched on in the previous article. One of its political consequences is to discredit the whole system of government in the eyes of the masses. Almost every week there is a scandal of some kind. Last spring, before the fall of the Tanaka Government, the Chief of Police was found accepting enormous bribes for the establishment of a new licensed-quarters area, and, moreover, money which had been obtained by forgery. Since the Tanaka Government fell there has been such an enormous crop of scandals involving the late Minister of Railways and the Governor of Korea first and then so many other officials and members of the previous Government that prosecutions had to be stayed at a certain point. Otherwise, as one newspaper expressed it, there would not be enough officials left to carry on the administration!

The Petty-bourgeoisie

The petty-bourgeoisie in Japan, which forms a very large class owing to the large number of small-scale industries and small shops and amongst whom should be included some of the smaller landowners, has been suffering acutely during these years of "economic depression," and is being roused against the present system no less than the peasantry and the workers. The small industrial capitalists, the shopkeepers and the petty landowners, who receive no part of the "profits of politics" and who, if they have not been completely ruined by the financial panics, the bank failures and the restriction of credit, have been reduced

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to a position in which they fear ruin at any moment and can hardly exist, have been roused to fury by the repeated evidence of widespread corruption in the Government and by the immense burden of direct and indirect taxation which they bear and which is in large part due to corruption and waste and to the presents given to Government supporters in the form of subsidies and import duties.

The fall of the Tanaka Government last summer and the putting into office of the Minseito to some extent reflects the discontent of the petty-bourgeoisie with the aggressive militarist policy of the Tanaka Government in China and the failure of that policy, with the wastefulness of its administration and its reactionary home policy. Above all, the change of Government reflects the acuteness of the economic crisis and the demand for stable financial conditions and a lightening of the burden of taxation.

The dissatisfaction of the petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, resulting from the increasing poverty of both these classes and the impossibility of absorbing all the "intellectuals" into the administration or into business and industrial enterprises on account of Japan's frustrated economic development, is reflected in the prevalence of "dangerous thinking" in the universities and in the High and Middle Schools.

"Dangerous thinking" is a term peculiar to Japan, which means questioning the existing system of society, criticising the private property system, being a Socialist of any kind or wishing to substitute any other system of government for the present imperial one. "Dangerous thinkers" range from Anarchists and mild Utopian Socialists to Communists, but it is naturally, above all, Communists who come under the suspicion of the authorities. The prevalence of Marxist influence in the universities causes bourgeois statesmen in Japan to have sleepless nights, gives rise to endless discussions in the Press and amongst ministers and officials as to how to counteract it, and has led to the institution of a special system of espionage in the universities since 1927 and to a special allocation of money for this purpose.

As in Tsarist Russia, the students are, for the most part,

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extremely poor, and as in Tsarist Russia in the nineties and subsequently they are "absorbed in theories of Marxism," they also adopt the weapon of the strike upon occasion and, as in Russia then and in Japan now, police repression does its utmost to root out disaffection, whilst a system of spying and agents-provocateur makes the open expression of Communist views extremely dangerous. As in Tsarist Russia also, it is students and ex-students dismissed from the universities for being Socialists who play a leading part in awakening the masses to political consciousness and in directing the economic struggle. It may truly be said that it is the inability of Japanese capitalism to absorb her intellectuals into the social structure, the "unemployment amongst the intelligentsia" which is so often discussed in the Press, which is one of the most potent forces bringing the masses under Communist influence, awakening them to "the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system."

The work of translating Marx, Lenin, Bukharin, Stalin, &c., has all been done by professors or students and paid for by the penalty of dismissal if not of imprisonment. The circulation of the works of Marx and Lenin in Japan to-day, nevertheless, runs into far larger figures than in England. The Japanese governing class is fully awake to the dangers resulting from the "unemployment amongst intellectuals" and the strength of Marxian influence in the universities. The difficulty of getting employment as clerks, &c., or into managerial or administrative posts in industry and the ruin of their parents in the various bank smashes or through the competition of large enterprises drives many intellectuals into the ranks of the labourers. For instance, an investigation made by the Social Bureau of Tokio City in 1927 covering 4,000 day labourers (the lowest paid workers) disclosed the fact that 516 of them were either graduates of universities, ex-students of universities or ex-students of intermediate schools.

Since 1925 imprisonment was the penalty for all those who formed or joined a society for the purpose of altering the National Constitution or repudiating the private property system. Since 1928, however, the penalty under the new law is death for

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Communists and imprisonment for questioning the system of private property.

The present Government realises better than the Seinkai Party the dangers of complete suppression of even mild criticism, and is inclined to allow a more open expression of opinions whilst pursuing a policy no less repressive of all dangerous activity on the part of the workers and peasants or of the intellectuals. The suppressed Ronoto has just recently been reformed, but with a rather mild programme of demands which does not threaten the actual existence of capitalism.

The Communist Party is under the same penalties as before, and most of its members are still in prison. It is clearly hoped to deprive the party of the support of the workers and peasants by allowing the Ronoto to re-form free of Communist influence with a milder programme. It is an attempt to draw the revolutionary movement into safe channels.

It is clearly a safer and wiser policy from the point of view of the capitalists to allow the formation of parties which stand for modifications or improvements in the structure of capitalist society (however impossible those modifications or improvements may be in the present position of Japanese capitalism) and to encourage the existence of "sane" trade unions by legalising them in order to give the masses a safe outlet for their grievances.

The Peasantry

I have already said something of the desperate poverty of the peasantry who have never been released of the burden of rent and whose farms are for the most part between 1½ and 2½ acres in size. Although I have pointed out various analogies with Tsarist Russia there is less resemblance here since the landowners are to very large extent small property owners. Nevertheless, owing to petty landowners frequently losing their lands through speculation or bank failures (here again the unstable financial position has had its effect) or through getting into debt, the number of big landowners is increasing by about 2 per cent. per annum. Moreover, the land is coming to be held more and more by townspeople. Seventy-five per cent. of the peasants are tenant-farmers either in respect of all or part of the land they cultivate.

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Out of the 5,500,000 families who cultivate the land 2,275,000 are part landowners and part tenants, and 1,500,000 are absolute tenants. The number of those who cultivate exclusively their own land is about 1,700,000.

A calculation of the number of absentee owners made in 1924 gave the figure as 969,192. About three-quarters of the peasants, whether cultivating their own land or renting it, have less than 2½ acres each. Although the yield per acre of rice is extremely high, the peasant, owing to the tiny area he cultivates, can barely get a living out of the soil, and those who are tenants pay half the crop to the landlord as rent in kind. This payment of rent in kind means that the peasant gets little or no advantage out of the rise in the price of rice, and since large numbers of the peasantry cannot afford to eat the rice they grow themselves but live on barley or imported rice, the duties imposed on foreign rice which are supposed to protect the peasant actually do him injury and only profit the landowners and the merchants.

There is no space here to go into full details concerning the economic position of the Japanese peasant, but it suffices to say that the living condition of the majority of the peasant class is generally recognised to be much lower than that of the proletariat, and a large proportion of the peasants only keep themselves alive by sending their daughters to the textile factories or the brothels, or their sons into industry or to the fishing fleets which leave each spring for the Kamtchatkan coasts,[3] or by rearing silk worms or engaging in some domestic manufacture as an additional source of income.

Each year about 780,000 men and women leave the villages to work in the towns, and of these 100,000 used to remain in industry. To-day it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to get employment, since unemployment in the towns is assuming serious proportions.

As might be expected, the miserable condition of the peasantry, and, above all, the fact that their conditions of life are growing harder and harder, has led to the development of a strong revolutionary movement among them, and has to a large extent

[3] Altogether there are 1,400,000 people employed in the fishing industry in Japan.

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destroyed the old "loyalty" and patriotism. The old Ronoto (Labour Farmer Party), which was under Communist influence and which was suppressed by the Government after the elections of 1928, drew much of its support from the Peasant Union of Japan (the Nihon Nomin Kumiai), the largest of the Tenant Farmers' Unions, which began a National Union Movement in 1922 and which at the end of 1926 had 3,926 branches and a membership of 346,693. The Peasant Union of Japan led the movement for reduction of rent which resulted sometimes in armed conflict and suppression by the police, but which was successful in getting rents reduced by as much as 30 per cent. in many places.

This Peasant Union of Japan has now declined in numbers owing to Government persecution and the breakaway of the reformists and their followers, but it is still the largest Peasant Union. The breakaway Union, the "All-Japan Peasant Union" (Zeu-Nihon Nomin Kumiai), is "centrist" and is under the leadership of Kagawa, a former Left-Winger, but now a trusted servant of the Government and a strenuous Christian preacher and opponent of Marxism. His Union is reported to have 70,000 members and is affiliated to the Centrist Nihon Rodo Kumiai Domei (Japanese Federation of Labour Unions). There is also the Right-Wing General Confederation of Japanese Peasant Unions (Nihon Nomin Kumiai Sodomei) which has only 30,000 members and which is affiliated to the Japanese General Confederation of Labour (Social Democratic).

The position at present is that the split of the Left Wing by the secession of the Centrist elements and the increased Government repression since 1927 has, for the time being, weakened the forces of the revolutionary movement among the peasantry and lessened the number of tenant disputes by enforced arbitration between peasants and landowners.

Since the Government can do little to relieve the agrarian crisis and since the militant organisations have only been driven underground there is bound to be a renewal of mass activity among the peasantry. The agricultural position is realised to be one fraught with extreme danger which might lead to revolution at any moment of increased tension. The present Government is

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proclaiming that the industrialisation of the country must be hurried on, realising full well that if the pressure on the land is not soon relieved there will be revolution.

The Proletariat

The comparatively small number of true proletarians in Japan has already been pointed out. The artisan population should, for the purpose of an estimation of class forces, be reckoned in, for the most part, with the petty-bourgeoisie.

There was some considerable development of labour activity during the Russo-Japanese war, but it was not till the last war that the Labour Movement began to develop rapidly. It was stimulated into great activity by the rapid rise in the cost of living and by the Russian Revolution which left an enduring stamp on the minds of the Japanese workers. In 1917 there was a great shipbuilding strike which was the prelude to a whole series of strikes and to the formation of a large number of trade unions, which pressed for higher wages and the eight-hour day and obtained both in the metal and shipbuilding industries.

In spite of the weakened position of the workers' organisations since the end of the boom period, and in spite of the treacherous activities of Bunji Suzuki and the rest of the leaders of the General Federation of Labour, the militant trade unionists have maintained their influence not only in the illegal or semi-illegal unions but even amongst many of the rank and file of the reformist unions.

It is a constant complaint in Japan that organisations founded by, or previously controlled by, the reformists tend to break away from their influence and become " Red."

The whole force of the State machinery is openly used against the workers when they go out on strike, just as it is used against them in their political activities. When a strike occurs the leaders are usually arrested by the police, picketing is, of course, forbidden and force is used against the strikers. In the case of the women workers in the textile factories it is usual to lock them up in the dormitories when a strike occurs and to lock down and whitewash the windows so that they cannot communicate or co-operate with the men on strike outside.

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In spite of the Government repression, and in spite of the efforts of the Social Democrats and "Christian Socialists" to "develop the Labour Movement into a constitutional agent of reform," the workers continue to be more under the influence of the "Radicals" than of the reformists, and are very largely influenced by the Communists in spite of the fact that the latter have to exist in secret and carry on all their work underground.

For the workers the fact of the capitalist dictatorship is too clearly revealed for them to harbour the illusions which the Social Democrats would like to instil into their minds.

One purpose of these two articles has been to show that the economic position in Japan does not at present provide a basis for the development of reformism in the ranks of the working class, since that basis is the enjoyment by the bourgeoisie of sufficient profits to make it easy for them to corrupt a section of the working class without sacrificing much themselves. In Japan the profits of the bourgeoisie are sinking rather than rising, and they are all required to maintain her precarious position as a Great Power and to keep her from falling entirely under American domination. This analysis of the position does not, however, exclude the possibility of a temporary slackening in the economic tension by the raising of loans in America now that the gold embargo is removed and by some kind of partnership with America in the exploitation of China.

What does at least seem clear from a survey of the economic situation and the relation of class forces in Japan to-day is that no capitalist country is nearer to the brink of revolution, and that any extra pressure on the masses, such as would result from even a small war, would probably bring the downfall of capitalism in Japan. Further, in Japan, as before in Russia, only the proletariat can carry through the primary task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, viz., the freeing of the peasantry, the solution of the agrarian crisis. The peasantry will be the driving force of the coming revolution led by the proletariat.

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The World of Labour

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SOUTH AFRICA

The Dingaan's Day Demonstrations

THE frantic efforts of the "Nationalist" Government to preserve the Colour Bar system, involving the exploitation on imperialist lines of six million black folk in South Africa, are becoming so difficult that cabinet ministers are breaking down under the strain and exhibiting a sort of political hysteria. This is particularly the case with Mr. Oswald Pirow, the young Minister of Justice, who has been responsible for two astounding pieces of proposed legislation and for the "Durban Raid," all within six weeks.

The Durban raid involved "secret" movements of large bodies of police from Johannesburg to Durban, a staged aeroplane flight by the Minister to the scene of action, the rounding up of thousands of natives, and the imprisonment of those who had not paid their poll-tax for the current year. Tear gas bombs (with which the police have lately equipped themselves and which they were apparently anxious to test under "field" conditions) were exploded amongst amazed and harmless groups of native onlookers. Natives were compelled to take off their hats and say "Nkos" ("Master") to individual policemen. Thus did the white man demonstrate his superiority and Mr. Pirow his new-found powers as Minister of "Justice."

Actually the whole affair was merely a magnified example of incidents which are of daily occurrence in this country. The Poll Tax forms part of the forced labour system prevailing here, where natives are heavily taxed in order to compel them to work for the white farmers, industrialists and householders. It is notorious that in many cases the poll-tax of £1 per year is greater than a month's wages. In general, police are always cuffing, kicking and insulting natives while examining passes, collecting taxes and maintaining the white man's hegemony in South Africa.

The two bits of legislation which Mr. Pirow has recently drafted and which he intends to submit to Parliament when it re-opens in January are :—

(a) An amendment to the Riotous Assemblies Act, giving him power as Minister of Justice to deport any person, native or European, not born in South Africa, who carries on political agitation among natives; to prohibit any agitator from entering any specified area; to restrain any person from attending any meeting; to prohibit any meeting; to ban any paper or other printed document circulating among natives.

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(b) An amendment to the Master and Servants Act (one of the pillars of South African society) so that it will in future include the following provisions :—

(1) a tax of £5 to be imposed on any native male between the ages of eighteen and sixty in the Transvaal and Natal who fails to do a minimum of three months' work per year (for a white employer, of course, it is understood); chiefs, headmen and ministers of religion are among those exempted;

(2) any contravention of the numerous provisions of the master and servants law in the two northern provinces may be punished by a whipping not exceeding five strokes, in addition to, or in substitution for, any punishment already provided.

Pirow's bills and his Durban raid roused a storm of fury among the native people. Numerous meetings of protest led up to mass demonstrations on Dingaan's Day (December 16).

This day is celebrated by the Dutch (Afrikaans-speaking) population, and latterly too, though to a less extent, by the British, as the anniversary of the Battle of Blood River (1838), when a small Dutch commando of Voortrekkers defeated with great slaughter, and with the loss of only a few men wounded on the white side, a Zulu army many thousands strong, thus destroying the power of the Zulu chief, Dingaan, and opening up the country to white colonisation.

As a counterblast to the " white South Africa " celebrations which are held on this day, native organisations have in a small way in recent years held rival demonstrations of their own. The League of African Rights (an organisation recently formed by the joint efforts of Communists, members of the African National Congress, I.C.U., and other native bodies,with the object of forming a common platform of minimum demands and of initiating a united struggle of the African masses against the disabilities under which they now suffer) declared Dingaan's Day to be a day of National Liberation and called for demonstrations throughout the country to popularise the demands of the League and particularly to protest against the Pirow bills.

The response of South African natives this year to the Dingaan's Day call has been excellent. Mass demonstrations were held in the towns and in the rural areas on a larger scale than ever before in the history of the native national movement. In Johannesburg over the week-end the League of African Rights held its first national conference. Delegates were present from all over the Union and plans for the liberation of the Black people of South Africa were drawn up and discussed. The mass meeting and procession in Johannesburg was attended by thousands of natives. The African National Congress and the Independent I.C.U. (Kadalie) joined forces with the Communist Party, but the Ballinger organisation held aloof—not that this made any difference, for Ballinger has no rank and file behind him.

At Durban, where Communist influence is weak and where the native leaders appear to be still suffering from the effects of Pirow's police bombs, a huge prayer meeting was held but no other form of demonstration.

In Capetown the procession was prohibited by the authorities. The natives, however, under the leadership of the African National Congress and the Communist Party, held a meeting at which effigies of Hertzog and Smuts

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were burnt. They then defied the prohibition and marched through the main streets according to programme. A clash occurred at Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, where a meeting, organised by the local branch of the Communist Party, was attacked by an armed band of Europeans. Four natives were wounded, one of whom lies at present in a serious condition. It remains to be seen what white justice will mete out to the two European "citizens" who have been arrested in connection with this affair.

E. R. Roux.

GERMANY

Rationalisation and Unemployment in Germany

THE last two months have seen a growing unrest in Germany, coupled with increasing financial pressure from above. In the January issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, in dealing with the Conference of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition, some of the demands of the workers were mentioned, together with the obstacles with which they were faced, but since then there has been an intense sharpening of the struggle along the lines indicated by Paul Merker in his report to the Conference.

Unemployment is rising steeply week by week; the numbers receiving relief increased by 233,000 or 20 per cent. in the first half of December, and by the end of the first week in January yet another 400,000 had been added.

The official figures stood at 1,300,000 at the end of 1929, an increase of 200,000 over the corresponding period in the previous year, but this does not represent anything like the total number out of work, since thousands, owing to the working of the Insurance Laws, are ineligible for benefit, and the recent Amending Act, which came into force on November 1, by tightening up the administration of the law has had the effect of excluding still further numbers from its scope. It is estimated that from 90 to 100 million marks will be saved annually by the new Act, which limits the definition of an unemployed person, reduces seasonal pay and lengthens the qualifying period and in some cases the waiting period. A further Bill, raising the rate of contribution from 3 to 3½ per cent., was brought forward by the People's Party, but was withdrawn owing to pressure from the Left.

Altogether it is estimated that by the middle of January the ranks of the unemployed had swollen to three millions, and of these half a million were to be found in Berlin and Brandenburg alone, where a quarter of the population is said to be affected, of whom nearly half were not in receipt of benefit. These figures are largely the result of mass dismissals of workers from some of the biggest concerns in Germany, such as the A.E.G. electricity works in Berlin and elsewhere, 14,000 from the Vulcan Yard in Hamburg, 3,300 at a time from the metal works at Essen, while Siemens, Lorenz, Babcock and other famous firms are all swelling the stream. These mass dismissals are the result of that "administrative rationalisation" which, according to the *Economist* (January 18, 1930) is superseding "technical rationalisation," now at a standstill for lack of fresh capital. This form of rationalisation not only "costs little or nothing and effects immediate economies," but it also

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helps to lower the standards of the worker, which have been slightly bettered since the inflation period, by threatening his sense of security and preparing him to accept whatever wages the employers are willing to offer.

Attacks on the workers' standards are also being made in other directions to begin with by the artificial raising of home prices through industrial cartels to a level far in advance of export or world prices. Next, the Customs Amendment Act has raised the already high tariffs on such vital commodities as grain and meat in the interests of the agriculturists, and on boots and shoes, matches, &c., in the interests of the industrialists. It is estimated that the financial reform programme of Hilferding, the late Social-Democratic Minister of Finance, has resulted in a remission of taxation amounting to 1,800 million marks for the benefit of the rich, while increasing mass taxation by about four millions. This programme includes taxes on beer, tobacco, &c., and also by a direct onslaught upon the resources of the municipalities, involves raising the price of gas, electricity and water and fares in many districts. In Berlin, which is particularly affected, the workers will have to pay as much as 25 per cent. more for municipal services from January 1; fares are raised from 20-25 pfennigs, electricity from 16-20, water from 15-20 and gas from 16-18; further, rents are to be raised from February 1.

In every part of Germany the challenge thrown down by the capitalists is being accepted, and mass demonstrations of protest have taken place not only in Berlin but in Hamburg, Essen, Frankfurt, Cologne, Koblenz and in hundreds of other towns. In many places the workers have invaded the Town Halls, where comfortable aldermen were discussing the motion, put forward everywhere by the Communists, for the payment of special Christmas allowances and for adequate relief for those for whom no provision is made, and in a number of cases allowances have been secured. The police have been everywhere in evidence, cudgelling, arresting and shooting demonstrators whom they were quite unable to quell.

A wonderful procession, 40,000 strong, marched through the West End of Berlin on Christmas Day, which broke through a police cordon three deep and alarmed the wealthy residents and shopkeepers, whose windows they broke, though no looting took place.

Throughout the campaign revolutionary workers have been supporting the unemployed and have adopted the Communist programme of a seven-hour day, the abolition of overtime, wage increases and resistance to the new burdens on the workers; the Government has retaliated by suppressing the *Rote Fahne*, the Communist daily, and threatening the suppression of the Communist Party. A general prohibition of open-air meetings and demonstrations has also been issued, but this has been widely disregarded and bloody encounters with police and Fascists continue, with an ever-growing casualty list as the situation becomes more acute.

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BOOK REVIEWS

CHARTISM AND MARXISM

From Chartism to Labourism. By Theodore Rothstein. (Martin Lawrence, 7s. 6d.)

THE scarcity of literature on the Chartist Movement makes any addition to the already existing material welcome; when it comes from the pen of one who has a reputation as a Marxist theoretician it is doubly so.

The book is, however, far from being in any way a complete study of the Chartist period or of the succeeding years. It is, as the sub-title indicates, a collection of " Historical Sketches of the English Working-Class Movement."

Commencing with the Reform Bill of 1832, Rothstein briefly recounts the story of the rise of the Chartist Movement, the development of the agitation over the Charter, the split in the movement and its final collapse. This section is, however, more than an outline of the history of the movement; it is packed with quotations and figures and in it some attempt is made to analyse the movement, its rise, development and decline.

There are three useful and interesting chapters on the " Origins of the Theory of the Class Struggle." In these three chapters the author takes the writings of O'Brien, one of the most prominent of the theoreticians of Chartism, and shows how closely in parts these writings correspond to the later theories of Marx and Engels.

He concludes this part of the book with seven chapters on the " Forerunners of the International," and gives the history of Harney's Fraternal Democrats, Ernest Jones, International Committee and the International Association. This part of the book, especially the chapters on the Fraternal Democrats, is by far the most interesting and valuable.

The second part of the book, " The Period of Trade Unionism," deals with the years that followed the disappearance of Chartism; the growth of the trade unions and their adhesion to Liberal politics; the rôle of the Unions during this period and the rise of the I.L.P. and the Labour Party. This part of the book can best be summed up in the author's comment in his introduction:—

> The conclusion which I have arrived at in this part is that the policy of compromise and class conciliation pursued by the British working class since the collapse of Chartism has not been justified by its results but has, on the contrary, landed British labour in a veritable cul-de-sac.

This bare outline in no way does justice to the manner of presentation, or to the wealth of detail that the author brings to support his contentions. The book is well supplied with facts, and in the latter part of the book the author brings up a veritable battery of figures to support his conclusions.

There are, however, a number of points in the book that are difficult to accept. The very importance of this work makes it necessary to examine its weaknesses. It is *the* only available Marxist book on the English working-class movement, and consequently must be examined not with blind approval but with appreciative criticism.

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The first part of the book deals with the Chartist Movement. While it contains many new points and some interesting points, it is very unsatisfactory in parts, and many of the conclusions reached are extremely debatable.

It is unfortunate that Rothstein's book begins with the Reform Bill, and merely mentions the preceding period. While it may have been necessary when the essay was originally written, the reader and possibly the author would have been helped to a clearer view of the rôle of the Chartist Movement had some attempt been made to examine the developing struggle of the preceding years. The Chartist Movement is inseparable from the struggles that went before it.

Chartism must be seen as the culmination of those struggles. It gathered up the fight for factory reform, for an unstamped Press, for a shorter working day; in it the workers saw their fight against the new Poor Law and anti-Trade Union legislation. Embodying all these previous struggles, the Chartist Party went forward beyond isolated struggles, co-ordinating them all, and advanced against capitalism itself.

The Chartist decade was the decisive period in a war that had been developing over the previous forty years; defeat was followed by the ebbing of the revolutionary tide for many years.

There is much that is superficial in Rothstein's analysis. To give one instance, he has a convenient explanation for many problems. His explanation is the non-revolutionary character of the London working class. Lovett and his Working Men's Association failed to appreciate the existing situation because "they were *Londoners*" (p. 37). The fact that the Chartist Convention m in *London* "influenced the course of events," and was one of four reasons for its failure. More amazing still, the General Strike of August, 1842, was defeated because "*London* and the Southern Counties failed to support the strike" (p. 73). This fact, maintains Rothstein, "is at the bottom of all the failures of Chartism" (p. 73).

This is unsatisfactory as an explanation of any of the examples cited; it is also contradicted by the facts. This theory ignores the rise of the revolutionary Democratic Association, which in a few months had over 4,000 members in London, to Lovett's 400. It ignores, too, the opinion of Harney, that the London workers were not non-revolutionary, but were awaiting a clear and decisive lead. Harney's opinion was borne out by later events in which the readiness of the London workers to fight was evidenced on more than one occasion.

In dealing with two important events in the history of Chartism, Rothstein displays an ignorance of essential facts. These two events, the Newport Insurrection and the famous Tenth of April, 1848, have not yet been satisfactorily dealt with; Rothstein, equally with other writers, fails to do so in this book.

On the Newport Insurrection, Rothstein states that:—

> Frost conceived the plan of releasing him (Vincent) from Newport. . . . Frost's abortive attempt was magnified into a great rebellion alleged to take place simultaneously in Yorkshire and Birmingham. . . . To-day, reading the records of the trial and the speeches of the prosecuting counsel, one cannot help wondering how the "historians" can still talk seriously of the "insurrection" in South Wales (p. 67).

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This last comment is at variance with the facts. Vincent was in Monmouth Gaol, *not Newport*, and to attempt to rescue Vincent by marching on Newport would have been madness. The records of Gammage, of Thomas Frost and others show that the rising in South Wales was bigger than a mere rescue of Vincent; the records prove that there was an organisation, with which Frost was in touch, which was preparing for a rising in Yorkshire and elsewhere upon receiving the news of a successful rising in Wales. Rothstein should have at least given the evidence put forward by some of the most reliable of the Chartists, and dealt with it, before passing such a sweeping judgment on such an important event.

Rothstein deals with the Tenth of April both in the section on "Chartism," and also in the appendix, which was written much later. In the book he dismisses the Kennington Common demonstration by accepting the bourgeois version—that is, that only some 30,000 attended the demonstration and that the number of signatures to the petition numbered less than two million.

In the appendix he contradicts his previous figures by his statement that there were 150,000 or more at the demonstration. The number of signatures he places at 2,000,000, a figure which Ernest Jones disputed to the day of his death. It was also common knowledge that at least half a million signatures were brought forward after the petition had been presented.

Equally unsatisfactory is Rothstein's treatment of the strike of 1842. He gives it exactly a page and explains its collapse as being due to the failure of the South to support the North. Of the character of the strike and of the divisions within the Chartist ranks as to whether the strike should be turned into a strike for the Charter there is no mention; this is all the more extraordinary when one realises that Harney opposed vigorously the idea of making it a strike for the Charter, and that Rothstein describes Harney as a "Bolshevik." The collapse of this strike had important bearings on the decline of the Chartist Movement, but beyond the superficial explanation given above, Rothstein makes no attempt to estimate the causes of its collapse.

The roots of Rothstein's weaknesses can probably be found in his failure to see the real divisions within the ranks of Chartism and their social origins. In the LABOUR MONTHLY for January and April, 1929, these divisions were examined, and it was shown that O'Connor, far from being the leader of the revolutionary section of the Movement, was in reality its most dangerous enemy. The explanation of O'Connor's hesitations and weaknesses, so damaging to the Chartist Movement, were found in the fact that he embodied the outlook of the non-proletarian section of the Movement, the hand-loom weavers, who looked to the Chartist Movement to lead them not forward to the conquest of class power but back to the pre-capitalist days, Rothstein, however, has no deeper explanation than that of non-Marxist writers into the usual divisions, *i.e.*, moral force and physical force. Indeed Rothstein is very reluctant to criticise O'Connor; even when dealing with the Tenth of April, Rothstein only states that O'Connor's behaviour "was unworthy of him." There is also no estimation of the reason why Chartism failed to keep the support of the factory workers who reaped the benefits of the Chartist agitation.

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In this part of the book the author is very unjust to Marx and Engels. This is chiefly due to the fact that he fails to deal with the active rôle played by Marx and Engels in the Chartist Movement through the Communist League and other organisations of the time. He suggests that Marx and Engels got much from the Chartists without acknowledgment. This is unjustified, and is certainly not proved by Rothstein. That Marx and Engels owed much to the experiences of Chartism is undeniable. But it is equally true that leading Chartists such as Jones and Harney learnt much from Marx, and that both Marx and Engels helped to develop the revolutionary theory of the Chartists. As for the suggestion that O'Brien was developing the theory of the class struggle years before Marx, so, for that matter, were many others long before O'Brien, and Marx never claimed that he originated the theory.

In this part of the book there are many other weaknesses which cannot be dealt with adequately here; to those who are acquainted with the material that exists, the poor way in which this section has been treated is a great disappointment.

The basic weakness of the book is laid bare very clearly in the second part of the book. This weakness is evidently due to Rothstein's association with Hyndman and the S.D.F. In this part of the book, the S.D.F. failings stands out almost on every page. Their dislike of strikes, their ultra-revolutionary attitude to the Unions and the working class (which ultimately led to their failure to mobilise the workers behind their programme), and their contempt for the workers. "The workers were not revolutionary enough for the S.D.F.; they could only just stomach the Socialism of MacDonald"—these are the reasons which one feels to be the reasons accepted by Rothstein for the failure of the S.D.F.—not, as was the real reason, the S.D.F.'s incorrect Marxism which led to its becoming a sect separated from the workers and their struggle.

A few quotations will show that this statement is justified:—

> The fact of the matter is that Socialism in England did not arise from the revolutionary sentiments of the working class (p. 273).

Writing of the S.D.F., Rothstein says:—

> The work performed by the Federation among these elements was truly colossal. . . . It formed a tradition which has now passed on to the Communist Party as *the direct successor in direct line* to the organisation founded by Hyndman some forty years ago (p. 275, our italics).

On strikes:—

> No revolutionary Marxist would make a fetish of strikes as was done in the good old days by the Revolutionary Syndicalists. The strike was never considered by revolutionary Marxists as a "revolutionary exercise," but was regarded as a very serious measure dictated by the arrogance of the capitalists *after all peaceful efforts had proved unavailing* (p. 205, our italics).

Few of the opportunist Trade Union leaders, whom Rothstein so correctly denounces, but would put their point of view on strikes in the same manner.

These quotations could be multiplied, but they are sufficient to illustrate the trend of thought behind the book.

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Rothstein's main failure, especially in this later part of the book, is that he does not treat the rise of the working-class movement dialectically. He sees the trade unions and the members of the unions as opportunist, supporting Liberal politics; the rise of the Labour Party (which he states was due to "an accident" and was saved by a similar "accident," *i.e.*, the Taff Vale decision!) he views as in no way an advance; he regards the S.D.F. as being above suspicion and criticism. In one part he suggests that Engels was wrong and Hyndman and the S.D.F. were right; and his view about the "period of opportunism" is that in these years the working class made no advance until the years immediately preceding the war, when the great strike wave marked the rise of the revolutionary tide in Britain.

In brief, Rothstein writes as if the development of the workers' revolutionary movement in England ceased with the disappearance of Chartism. Opportunism landed the British workers into a "cul-de-sac," and only on the eve of the war were signs of advance to be seen. In conclusion, we might quote the author's comment on the present position, "Chartism has become militant and victorious Communism" (p. 92).

This analysis, presented by Rothstein, gives no sense of development; no picture of the consolidation of the organisation of the working class; and no sign of understanding that even the years of "opportunism" represented some advance by the British workers.

The break in the world supremacy of Britain resulted in the stirrings of the masses. Then came the rise of the S.D.F., the docks strike, the rapid growth of the "new unionism," the rise of the I.L.P., and the tremendous growth of the Labour Party, and following these the development of Syndicalism and varied revolutionary activity. These were continuous; and the rise of Chartism in a new and more powerful form—that of the Communist Party—was only possible because of the developments in the years between 1850 and the war.

These main weaknesses of the book militate against giving to the book a whole-hearted welcome. It is not *the* Marxist contribution to a study of the history of the British working class, it is by no means without errors, but it is a contribution to our all too meagre literature on the development of our own movement, and, as such, should be welcomed and read by all militant workers. With all its faults and weaknesses, which should be understood and borne in mind, the book puts an important weapon in the hands of our class.

REG. GROVES.

A DYSPEPTIC INTERPRETATION OF KARL MARX

Karl Marx. By Otto Rühle. (Allen & Unwin, 1929. 12s. 6d.)

IN Britain, works on Marx and Marxism are few and far between; even for the standard works of Marx the British student is mainly dependent upon the mangled American editions. Because of this and because of the general backwardness of scientific theory in Britain any new book on Marx and his work is likely to be valued, however poor its quality. This makes it necessary to review critically the latest addition to books on Marx.

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It can be said in favour of Rühle's book that it brings before the English reader quotations from the correspondence and works of Marx that are either not available or difficult to obtain in English. The extracts from the letters of Marx and Engels, from articles and from some of the works of Marx are of great interest and for this reason the book has *some* interest for the student of Marxism.

But the manner and methods of Rühle are poor in the extreme ; he gives no evidence of understanding the period during which Marx and Engels developed and matured ; he fails to present an analysis of the Labour movement of the time and he does not attempt to relate the genius of Marx to the period in which he lived. His picture of Marx is a picture of an irritable intellectual with many vices, jealous, and one who imposed himself upon the working-class movement of the time, fought for the leadership of the movement and then withdrew into obscurity out of spite, after having almost broken the working-class movement.

Rühle fails to see, and in failing condemns himself and his book, the development of Marx as part of the development of the Labour movement of the period ; that Marx is only great and enduring because Marx embodied in his teachings the spirit of the new class that was finally to end the rule of capitalism and bring in Socialism ; that Marx developing with the rising working-class movement drew from the experiences of the movement in its different phases an outline of its future struggles and the tactics necessary for the march forward to success.

A book by a Marxist on Marx and his work would have been invaluable as an outline of the teachings of Marx and the relation of Marx to the contemporary working class. It could have shown the rise and development of the early working-class movement and as part of this the development and maturing of Marx and Engels. It could have been a guide to the work of these two in their task of showing the basis of society, the relation of the class struggle to the development of society, the rôle of the working class in modern society and the immediate tactics of that class in its struggles. Instead, Rühle sees the development of Marx as apart from his time and the struggles of his time. His is a bourgeois conception of history ; the materialist conception of history is foreign to his outlook ; Marx's rise and development is explained as being due to his " sense of inferiority " which " increased his urge towards compensatory achievement."

This fundamental weakness is further revealed in his treatment of the relations of Marx with other sections of the working-class movement. As an example of this we can take the section dealing with Lassalle and Marx. According to Rühle the differences between Marx and Lassalle were due to the personal weaknesses of Marx.

> Our minds tend to react with sympathy towards those from whom we expect advancement and profit and with antipathy towards those from whom we expect danger and loss. . . . It is fairly obvious that Marx regarded Lassalle as a dangerous rival . . . that was why his letters to Lassalle were sparse and so cold. (Page 229.)

In dealing with the reception accorded by Marx to Lassalle's book *Heraclitus*, Rühle explains Marx's contempt for the work by the fact that

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" Marx had to pay excess postage to the amount of two shillings " which " ensured a bad reception for the book " (p. 230). To those familiar with the real political differences between Marx and Lassalle, this treatment of the question is more than ridiculous ; it is a sheer distortion of the facts. Professor Riazanov's articles in the LABOUR MONTHLY (May and June, 1929) showed Lassalle's policy as a policy of repudiation of the Communist League and previous German revolutionary movements and as a policy of alliance with Bismarck and the Prussian State. The danger of this policy to the rising working-class movement was seen clearly by Marx and opposed and fought by Marx, precisely for this reason. Rühle's account of this episode and of others in which Marx differed from individuals and groups is contemptible.

In this and in many other examples that could be cited, as well as in his general treatment of the period and the working-class movement, Rühle demonstrates his failure to grasp the fundamentals of Marxism. The book is a typical product of the German revisionist school and cannot be recommended. Professor Riazanov's smaller work *Marx and Engels* is of far greater value to the student of Marxism and beside it this book stands as a cheap and shoddy work on a subject never understood by the author.

On many occasions one has regretted the high price of books on revolutionary theory—but there are times when one is grateful that the price of a book prevents its too wide circulation.

R. G.

TECHNIQUE NOT POLITICAL ECONOMY

The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country, 1860-1927. By G. C. Allen, M.Com., Ph.D. Pp. 479. (George Allen & Unwin, 25s. net).

IT is quite obvious that Mr. G. C. Allen is under the influence of Mr. G. D. H. Cole and so his history of the industrial development of Birmingham is " about it and about it," but fails to get anywhere in particular. The cocoa firm of Cadbury's put down a sum of money at the disposal of the Birmingham University four years ago, with the request that the Faculty of Commerce should undertake a survey of the industrial development of Birmingham and district during the last half century, and so Mr. Allen, a graduate of the University, was given the job. This type of book is fairly common, something in the nature of intellectual gifts, tributes to Literature or the Arts, in return for services rendered by " Big Business."

Mr. Allen has compiled a great deal about the changing industries, has much interesting matter regarding the various processes employed, and gives many close details of the kinds of work performed, but there is very little about the workers. He quotes many Government publications and official reports, but he overlooked, apparently, the Report of the Medical Officer of Health. He says nothing about the Housing question of Birmingham, nothing about the slum problem, nothing about the death rate, nothing about the infantile mortality, all these matters must have escaped him or he thought them unimportant, or not in any way related to his subject. Trade Disputes

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and Strikes have a very small place in his book and are mentioned quite incidentally.

Of course, Mr. Allen may protest by saying that the purpose of his book is to set out a number of facts restricted to a number of firms with whom he associated, not to cover industrial life. To which the obvious reply is, why not say so, and why not choose a title less sweeping than the one he has chosen? Since writers like Thorold Rogers and H. de Gibbins penned their volumes on industrial history, students have been led to expect more attention not less to the workers, without whom the industrial development is impossible.

Rationalisation is not discussed; which is a pity. It is also a pity that the volume closes with the year 1927, otherwise Mr. Allen would have had an opportunity of telling the story of the treatment of the older workers at Bournville under the process of Rationalisation. Philanthrophy works in wondrous ways.

H. S.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Craftsmanship of Books. By J. Howard Whitehouse (George Allen & Unwin. 50 pp., 3s. 6d.)

Criterion Miscellany:—

No. 7. *Italian Painting.* By A. F. Clutton-Brock. (68 pp., 2s. net.)
No. 8. *In Retreat.* By Herbert Read. (Faber & Faber. 48pp., 1s. net.)

The People's Year Book—1930. (Co-operative Wholesale Society. 320 pp., 3s.)

From Chartism to Labourism. By Tho. A. Rothstein. Historical sketches of the English Working Class Movement. About 36 pp., 7s. 6d. Cloth.

Like all other Nations? A Unique Nation. By J. L. Magnus. (Herod's Gate, Jerusalem. 77 pp.)

British Broadcasting Corporation Pamphlets. An interesting series giving illustrations and notes of lessons and talks. (B.B.C., Savoy Hill, W.C.2. 1d. each.)

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